

# The Development of Organic Farming in Taiwan:

## A History of Scientific Paradigm Shifts

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This paper uses scientific paradigm shift in Taiwan as the vantage point to understand its current development in organic farming and associated problems. The three distinct evolutionary stages of Taiwanese agriculture can be summarized as: 1) The pre-1895 natural farming regime that largely relied on local or indigenous knowledge systems; 2) The 1895-1986 period characterized by small-scale, intensive farming under the herald of scientism; and 3) The post-1986 rise of organic farming under the influence of global environmentalism. These paradigm shifts unravel the complex social and political discourses underpinning Taiwan's contorted history. Even more importantly, however, this paper argues that the main impetus of these paradigm shifts did not originate from local social needs or in response to practices or theoretical developments engineered by local scientific communities. Rather, all changes were results of gross transplanting of worldviews, ideas and practices developed in global nucleated centers of North American, Europe and Japan. The significant discrepancy between Taiwan's dominant scientific paradigms and practical societal needs can explain why the development of organic farming in Taiwan faces seemingly insurmountable structural difficulties.

Keywords: organic farming, scientific paradigm, local knowledge, global nucleated areas, environmentalism

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