

FARMING WITH FAITH: THE NEXUS BETWEEN CREATION/ENVIRONMENT AND RELIGION

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Abstract: Environmental protection is a critical component of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals. Farmers worldwide play a pivotal role in safeguarding the environment, often drawing upon their religious traditions to inform their practices and worldviews. These traditions profoundly influence their relationship with the more-than-human community and their environmental consciousness. Despite this influence, secularization theories have posited that science and rationality would gradually supplant religion in modern societies. Some environmentalists have critiqued anthropocentric religious narratives for exacerbating environmental degradation. Hence, until recently, religious entities have been largely absent from discussions on sustainable development. This paper examines the role of religious communities, spiritual leaders, and sacred texts in shaping the environmental consciousness of Buddhist and Christian farmers in Taiwan. The findings reveal that religious beliefs remain central to shaping individuals' worldviews and environmental consciousness. Furthermore, the study demonstrates that when religious narratives are interpreted through a lens of reverence for creation, they can foster ecological stewardship.

Keywords: *Buddhism, Christianity, Environmental Consciousness, Environmental Protection, Farmers, Sustainable Development.*

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1. Introduction

Environmental protection and economic and social development constitute fundamental objectives of the United Nations (UN) sustainable development (SD) concept. Numerous studies highlight the nexus between environmental protection and SD, asserting that preserving natural resources and ecosystems is indispensable for long-term, equitable development. Creation is facing unprecedented environmental challenges that threaten the survival of both humans and the more-than-human community of life. Given the critical environmental challenges we face, it is widely acknowledged that humanity has reached a threshold beyond which recovery may no longer be feasible. This situation has prompted an urgent need to identify effective strategies to address environmental degradation, underscoring the importance of coordinated global efforts to prevent further damage and promote sustainable environmental stewardship. Numerous mainstream environmental movements (Hibbard 24-26) have emerged in response to the ongoing environmental crisis, each seeking to address the issue through different approaches. Some movements focus on scientific solutions. Some movements have taken a political stance, advocating for enacting new laws to enhance environmental protection. Others adopt a philosophical or theological perspective, emphasizing the need for new environmental ethics that encourages simpler, more eco-friendly lifestyles (Schroll 30). While these movements have effectively raised awareness and garnered political attention, many criticize them for "being... complicit in the social, cultural, and historical structures that are themselves responsible for the degradation of the Earth" (Fisher 155).

Contemporary discussions on care for creation increasingly recognize that addressing the environmental crisis requires more than solely scientific, political, or material analyses of environmental issues. A substantial body of research attributes the environmental crisis to a self-centered consciousness and a crisis of spirituality. "The move from environmental crises into more sustainable human-Earth relationships calls for a change of consciousness" (Grim 263). Many hold that environmental crisis

“is also a moral and spiritual crisis which, in order to be addressed, will require broader philosophical and religious *understandings of ourselves as creatures of nature*, embedded in life cycles and dependent on eco systems” (emphasis mine, Tucker and Williams xvi). Thus, in addition to the various methods proposed and implemented for environmental protection, experts emphasize the significance of cultivating individual's environmental consciousness. “Environmental consciousness shapes judgments about the natural environment through self-reflection and analysis of technological transformation, and social and cultural contexts” (Khrushch and Karpiuk 122). “What we do about ecology depends on our *ideas* of the man-nature relationship” (emphasis mine, White 1206). Numerous factors as outlined by Gifford and Nilsson influence these *ideas*. An individual's environmental consciousness is a key factor among these influences. This research examines the influence of religious beliefs on the development of environmental consciousness and how this, in turn, shapes the human-nature relationship.

2. Research Purpose and Questions

All 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) explicitly or implicitly refer to creation. The environment plays a pivotal role in achieving SD (Albu; Dogaru; Jasrotia; Lemons), as its ideals advocate for improving human welfare without compromising the protection of creation, upon which all development ultimately depends. All living beings rely on the environment, and human well-being and economic prosperity are increasingly intertwined with the health of creation. However, prioritizing economic and social development has often led to the extensive manipulation and destruction of creation. Consequently, the UN underscores respecting the environment as a fundamental component of sustainable economic and social development. The agricultural sector plays a crucial role in both care for creation and the global economy, with approximately one-third of the world's population depending on agriculture, including forestry, fishery, and hunting (Alston and Pardey). Agriculture remains the second largest source of employment worldwide after the services sector

(FAO). Farmers, particularly indigenous farmers, contribute significantly to SD through their environmental-friendly agricultural practices. Recognizing the contributions of farmers worldwide is essential, as their environmentally conscious lifestyles help conserve creation and natural resources. Furthermore, farmers' traditional knowledge and wisdom play a critical role in advancing SD (UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples).

Worldwide, more than eight-in-ten people identify with a religious group (Pew Research Center, "The Global"). Projections indicate a substantial increase in the global religious population in the coming years (Pew Research Center, "The Future"). This anticipated growth challenges secularization theories that predict the decline or demise of religion. Research on farmers worldwide has demonstrated that the majority belong to specific religious communities, with their agricultural practices often shaped by religious narratives and teachings (Abdulrachman; Hiagbe; Ogbonnaya; On and Pugh-Kitingan; Rademaker and Jochemsen). These research findings challenge those environmentalists¹ who attribute the current environmental crisis to religion. The influence of religious beliefs on environmental consciousness and agricultural practices also underscores the necessity of incorporating religion into SD discussions. This research examined the influence of religious communities, masters, and teachings on the agricultural practices of Buddhist and Christian farmers in Taiwan. Research (interview) questions included: (i) Describe your relationship with the natural environment, (ii) Explain your religious background and its relation to the natural environment, (iii) Narrate the relationship between your religious faith and your agricultural practices, (iv) Do you understand what is meant by sustainable development? (v) How do your agricultural practices contribute to sustainable development.

¹ Scholars such as Arnold Toynbee, Lynn White Jr., and Sally McFague have articulated such criticisms, which warrant serious consideration (Sayem). However, these criticisms fail to withstand the scrutiny of contemporary scholarship on the intersection of ecological crises and religious cosmology.

3. Research Method

3.1 Participants and Procedure

This study included 20 Buddhist and 20 Christian farmers, all residing in various regions of Taiwan. These farmers practiced organic farming and adhered to Taiwan Good Agricultural Practice (TGAP)² standards. Table 1 summarizes the sampling demographics, including details on the participants' age and farming experience. Fu Jen Catholic University Institutional Review Board provided ethics approval for this study before proceeding with the interviews. Informed consent was obtained preceding the commencement of each interview. Informed consent consisted of the purpose and method of study, benefits, and risks involved, as well as the explanation of participant anonymity in data analysis and in any possible oral or written presentations. Participants were also informed of their right to withdraw from the interview at any time.

3.2 Data Collection and Analysis

This research employed qualitative research methods and analysis. Qualitative research broadly studies social phenomena, including thought processes, belief systems, behaviors, and practices. Thus, various genres of qualitative research are pragmatic, naturalistic, interpretive, and grounded in the context of people's lived experiences. The principles of qualitative research emphasize the holistic nature of the social world. Thus, its methodology engages in a systematic reflection on the complex reasoning that is both emergent and evolving in the research and analysis process (Corbin and Strauss; Marshall and Rossman). The researchers collected data through semi-structured and in-depth individual interviews. Before conducting the formal study, a pilot interview with two farmers was conducted to clarify the

² TGAP is a set of operational standards developed by government agricultural research units, along with experts and scholars, to guide agricultural product operators in adopting risk management strategies and production methods that align with sustainable agriculture principles. For more about TGAP, see <https://taft.moa.gov.tw/cp-1063-1991-de3c9-2.html>

appropriateness of the questions, and the questions were revised accordingly. Interviews lasted between 30 and 45 minutes and were audio-recorded for accuracy. The recordings were transcribed verbatim, and subsequent coding was employed to identify and categorize key themes and patterns in the data. During the data coding and analysis process, researchers categorized participants' relationship with creation into five thematic areas: ecological consciousness, ecological education, ecological ethics, ecological spirituality, and ecologically sustainable behaviors. This paper will focus exclusively on the influence of religious beliefs on the development of environmental consciousness, which, in turn, contributes to the care of creation.

4. Environmental Consciousness

Olena Khrushch and Yuliya Karpiuk (122-123) offer a summary of how scholars define and conceptualize environmental consciousness. Environmental consciousness involves an awareness of the interconnectedness of all living organisms and the ecosystems they inhabit. This awareness is rooted in a deep respect for creation and an acknowledgment of the intrinsic value of all its components. Such a consciousness cultivates a sense of responsibility toward creation, encouraging individuals and communities to adopt sustainable practices, conserve resources, protect biodiversity, and engage actively in environmental preservation.

4.1 Factors that Influence

Among the various factors that contribute to the formation of environmental consciousness - such as cognitive, cultural, emotional, (social) media, personal, psychological, situational, and social (Gifford and Nilsson; Pham and Nguyen; Si, Jiang, and Meng; Ziadat) - religious and spiritual beliefs have received relatively limited attention as a potential influence (Glaab and Fuchs 293). This neglect is particularly noteworthy given that, globally, approximately eighty percent of the population identifies with a religious group. While some scholars contend

“that not only can one be moral without religion, but that one should even give up religious beliefs to be truly righteous” (Sia 703), numerous studies demonstrate that religious beliefs play a significant role in shaping ethical behavior, judgment, and practice. To address complex issues effectively, a broader understanding is necessary, which is why many scholars recognize the critical importance of ethics, morality, and religious/spiritual values, incorporating them into SD discussions (Beek 32). Pope Francis shares a similar view: “We need to realise that the solutions will not emerge from just one way of interpreting and transforming reality. Respect must also be shown for the various cultural riches of different peoples, their art and poetry, their interior life and spirituality” (LS §63). This research affirms the impact of religious beliefs on the formation of environmental consciousness.

5. Results and Discussion

As detailed in Table 2, the sample included both Buddhist and Christian participants. Among the 20 Buddhist farmers, there were 10 females and 10 males aged 40 to 66. Most Buddhist participants voluntarily 'chose' their faith, while a few inherited it from their families (Table 2:1 and 2:2 - Religious faith). Two participants were uncertain about the origins of their religious beliefs. The inspiration for adopting and practicing Buddhism was diverse, influenced by factors such as Buddhist communities, masters, and scriptures (Tables 2:1 and 2:2 - Inspiration behind religious faith). Of the 20 Christian farmers interviewed, consisting of 10 females and 10 males, 19 'inherited' their religious beliefs during infancy (Table 2:3 and 2:4 - Religious faith). The primary source of inspiration for their religious faith was their family, although a few participants also cited the influence of church leaders, such as catechists, nuns, and pastors/priests. Only one participant, identified as TCF 02, mentioned the Bible as a source of inspiration for her religious beliefs (Tables 2:3 and 2:4 - Inspiration behind religious faith). They were aged between 37-76. Although most farmers interviewed were elderly and not highly educated, the researchers could observe their willingness

and enthusiasm to protect creation. All participants were involved in organic and/or Taiwan Good Agricultural Practice (TGAP). Organic farming employs the sustainable agricultural system that uses ecologically based pest controls and biological fertilizers derived mainly from animal and plant wastes. It avoids using synthetic substances like pesticides, synthetic fertilizers, and genetically modified organisms. Their farming experience ranged from 2 to 55 years.

5.1 Environment versus Income

One of the interview questions asked was, "If you were to choose between more income and the protection of the environment, which would you choose, and why?" Of the 40 interviewees, 34 prioritized environmental protection, while 3 farmers chose income, and 3 were undecided. Although most farmers preferred environmental protection over income, their ultimate goal was to increase their income through environmental-friendly agricultural practices. However, for a few participants (TBM 06, TCF 03, 04, 05, 07, TCM 05), environmental protection was viewed as an end in itself, independent of income considerations. Their doctrinal and personal environmental consciousness largely influenced their preference for environmental protection.

5.2 Doctrinal Environmental Consciousness

Buddhist farmers exhibited a profound doctrinal understanding of environmental consciousness (Table 3:1 and 3:2 - Doctrinal), deeply rooted in Buddhism's core doctrines such as coexistence, compassion, and the interconnectedness of all life forms. Central to this worldview are the precepts of non-violence, the protection of all creatures, and the respect for the sanctity of life. These precepts not only promote a sense of moral responsibility toward creation but also underscore the equality of all, fostering an ethical framework that prioritizes the preservation and well-being of creation. This holistic approach reflects a broader Buddhist understanding of the interconnectedness of all phenomena, wherein the welfare of humans and more-than-human community of life are seen as inseparable.

Many Christian farmers were indigenous people, and their ancestors' views on creation profoundly influenced their environmental consciousness. These farmers were deeply rooted in traditional values and held strong religious convictions. Their genuine love and care for creation were often grounded in the belief that God is the Creator of all things. This foundational belief led them to view creation as sacred, entrusted to humanity for stewardship and care (Table 3:3 and 3:4 - Doctrinal). For many Christian farmers, this understanding of creation reinforced a moral responsibility to protect and preserve creation, seeing their actions as part of their duty to honor God's creation.

5.2.1 Comparison

Both Buddhist and Christian farmers demonstrated deep love and reverence for creation, a perspective that was significantly influenced their environmental consciousness that motivated many to transition from destructive and unsustainable farming methods to more environmental-friendly approaches, such as organic farming and Taiwan Good Agricultural Practices (TGAP). These farmers viewed their agricultural activities not merely as a means of income, but as a way to honor creation and uphold their ethical and spiritual beliefs. By prioritizing care for creation over immediate financial gain, they made substantial contributions to the protection and sustainability of the ecosystem, integrating their faith with their farming practices holistically.

However, Buddhist and Christian farmers exhibited differences in their attitudes toward creation, largely shaped by their respective spiritual backgrounds. As previously discussed, most Buddhist farmers 'chose' their faith as adults, which meant they had to engage more deeply with the Buddhist community, masters, and sacred texts to gain a comprehensive understanding of their religious tradition. This process enabled them to cultivate a solid doctrinal knowledge of Buddhism's teachings on the interconnectedness of all life and humans' ethical responsibility toward creation. The impact of this doctrinal foundation is evident in their attitudes toward creation, which are characterized by a deep sense of interconnectedness and a commitment to living

in harmony with creation.

In contrast, Christian farmers, many of whom 'inherited' their faith in childhood, often internalized environmental values that were more directly passed down through familial and local indigenous traditions. Consequently, the Christian community, religious leaders, and scripture had a less pronounced impact on Christian farmers' understanding of the human-nature relationship compared to their Buddhist counterparts. Although most Christian farmers believed that God created the universe and humans are responsible for protecting creation, they often lacked a more profound theological framework to articulate how their religion specifically addressed the relationship between humans and the nonhuman world. As a result, many Christian farmers were less equipped to draw from their religious tradition when contemplating environmental issues.

For Buddhist farmers, values such as the equality of creation, the interconnectedness of all beings, and the sacredness of life were central to their relationship with the nonhuman world. These principles permeated their daily practices and interactions with creation, reflecting a deep sense of oneness with all living things and a commitment to preserving the balance of nature. Christian farmers seldom emphasized these specific values in their relationship with creation. While they believed that God created the world and entrusted them with its care, the focus of their environmental consciousness was often more centered on stewardship and the idea of the environment as a gift from God. Their views on creation less emphasized the intrinsic interconnectedness and equality of all life forms, and more aligned with a sense of duty to manage creation responsibly according to divine will.

5. 3 Personal Environmental Consciousness

Participants' doctrinal understanding of creation, influenced by their religious beliefs, profoundly impacted their personal environmental consciousness. The Buddhist farmers, in particular, could articulate an emotional connection with creation. For some, the environment was a maternal figure deserving our

care, love, and protection. Others saw the environment as a gift and a resource to be nurtured. This emotional attachment to creation motivated many Buddhist participants to engage in the stewardship of creation and show reverence for all forms of life. The perceived magnanimity of creation reinforced the belief that humans are not masters of creation, but stewards entrusted with its care. Although most Christian farmers believed that God created the universe, they often struggled to reconcile this doctrine with their personal understanding of the human-nature relationship. Regarding their attitudes toward creation, many Christian farmers viewed the environment as a gift and a source of comfort. They expressed emotions of care, gratitude, love, and worship toward creation. However, compared to their Buddhist counterparts, Christian farmers generally exhibited a less emotional connection with creation.

5.3.1 Comparison

Although Buddhist and Christian farmers expressed strong doctrinal and personal attitudes toward creation, Buddhist farmers appeared more passionate and self-motivated in their efforts to care for creation than their Christian counterparts. Regarding intention and commitment to environmental stewardship, Buddhist farmers exhibited a higher level of environmental consciousness, which drove them to be more proactive and dedicated than their Christian counterparts.

6. Religious Beliefs and Environmental Consciousness

Both Buddhist and Christian farmers acknowledged the significant influence of their religious traditions on the development of their environmental consciousness (Table 2 – Inspiration behind religious faith) and on their enthusiasm for care for creation. Most explicitly described how their respective religious communities, spiritual leaders, and scriptures shaped their doctrinal and personal attitudes toward creation. However, researchers also observed notable differences here. As previously mentioned, most Buddhist farmers 'chose' their religious affiliation as adults and, as a result, actively engaged in classes on

Buddhism, particularly those focused on Buddhist environmental perspectives. They were highly attentive to the exhortations of their Buddhist masters, especially concerning the care and protection of creation. Furthermore, many regularly participated in and actively promoted their Buddhist community's environmental-related activities. Most Christian farmers interviewed were indigenous people, and their affiliation with Christianity was relatively recent. Although their ancestors had embraced Christianity and they had inherited the Christian faith from them, their views on creation remained primarily rooted in their local indigenous traditions. Christian teachings on creation had minimal influence on their environmental perspectives. Many of them acknowledged that their religious leaders rarely addressed environmental issues during liturgies and other spiritual activities. Additionally, the Christian community in Taiwan organized very few environment-related initiatives or activities.

7. Conclusion and Implications

This paper focused on the impact of religious beliefs on the formation of participants' environmental consciousness. Nearly all the participants acknowledged that their religious beliefs significantly shaped their environmental perspectives. We also examined key differences in their environmental perspectives. Beyond these conclusions, we want to highlight the potential for mutual learning between these religious traditions to enhance their contributions to care for creation further. As previously discussed, the Buddhist community, leaders, and sacred texts profoundly influenced Buddhist farmers' environmental consciousness. In addition to reinforcing fundamental Buddhist doctrines, Buddhist masters have actively interpreted Buddhist scriptures in relation to contemporary environmental issues, encouraging followers to incorporate care for creation into both their communal and individual spirituality. Thus, alongside personal self-cultivation, environmental stewardship became a central, practical component of Buddhist farmers' spiritual practice.

Despite the firm convictions of Christian farmers regarding their faith and their commitment to environmental protection, many expressed a sense of neglect in terms of exhortations from Christian leaders to actively contribute to the care of creation. In this regard, Christian religious leaders in Taiwan could learn much from their Buddhist counterparts. As a major world religion, Christianity carries significant influence, and its leaders have a crucial responsibility to encourage believers to cultivate a creation-inclusive spirituality. Organizing environment-related activities alongside other spiritual practices could help Christian farmers develop a deeper connection to this form of spirituality, fostering a more profound commitment to environmental stewardship.

Secularization theories, which posit that science and rationality would gradually replace religion as society progresses, have been challenged by a growing body of research that documents the resurgence of religion across the world. These studies highlight religions' continued influence on diverse dimensions of human life, contrary to predictions of their decline (Dhima and Golder). Our research further demonstrates that religious beliefs continue to shape individual's worldviews, including one's environmental consciousness. Participants in this research emphasized the significant role that their religious convictions play in shaping their attitudes toward environmental issues, suggesting that religion remains a powerful force in contemporary society, influencing not only personal morality but also broader ecological perspectives.

Many environmentalists have criticized anthropocentric religious narratives, which view the nonhuman world primarily through an economic lens, arguing that such perspectives contribute significantly to the ongoing environmental crisis. While these criticisms are not without merit, the findings of this study offer a more nuanced understanding. Contrary to the simplistic view that religion inherently fosters an exploitative relationship with creation, this study indicates that participants predominantly recognize the intrinsic value of creation. Moreover, their religious beliefs extend beyond this recognition,

emphasizing creation's sacred dimension. This deep awareness of creation's sanctity motivates them to engage in environmental protection efforts actively. This study demonstrates that religious faith, rather than exacerbating environmental degradation, can indeed inspire sustainable practices. This research suggests that religious narratives when interpreted through a lens of reverence for creation, can play a constructive role in fostering ecological stewardship.

By highlighting the potential of religious narratives to serve as a catalyst for care for creation and sustainability, the study advocates for reconsidering religion's role in contemporary SD discussions. The exclusion of religion from the SDGs discourse risks overlooking a fundamental dimension of human experience, identity, and worldview. Since the SDGs are fundamentally about people, disregarding the spiritual and ethical frameworks that shape individual's values and behaviors could undermine efforts toward long-term sustainability. This omission may not only limit the scope of SD discussions but, as the study suggests, could have devastating consequences for achieving a holistic and inclusive approach to environmental protection and social well-being. Embracing religious perspectives within SD discourse offers a more comprehensive understanding of human nature, potentially fostering deeper, more sustainable commitments to care of creation.

8. Limitations and Future Directions

The initial considerations outlined in this qualitative research are not exhaustive. The interpretative paradigm employed in this research inherently reflects the subjective viewpoint of the researcher, which may have introduced a degree of bias. Despite the semi-structured nature of the interviews, guided by a predetermined framework, deviations occurred as researchers occasionally posed leading questions to gather more comprehensive responses. These deviations could influence the accuracy of data representation, the identification of themes, and the interpretation of the findings.

Most of the Christian participants in this study were

indigenous who had embraced the Christian faith. However, the Christian environmental perspectives did not fully replace their traditional indigenous views on creation. Future research could investigate indigenous farmers who have adopted other religious traditions to explore whether their indigenous environmental perspectives have been influenced by their newly embraced faith. Such studies could provide valuable insights and allow for a reevaluation of criticisms from environmentalists such as Lynn White Jr., who accused religious traditions such as Christianity of being anthropocentric, eradicating pagan animism, establishing a dualistic view of humanity and nature, and promoting an instrumental perspective on nature (1205). Furthermore, future research could benefit from employing a mixed-methods approach that combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies. This would mitigate interpretative bias and enhance the generalizability of research findings and implications.

Table 1: Sampling Demographics Summary

Nationality	Taiwan			
Religion	Buddhism		Christianity	
Gender	Female	Male	Female	Male
Number of participants	10	10	10	10
Age between	51-65	40-66	48-67	37-76
Farming experience	02-25 years	05-31 years	10-55 years	05-50 years
Total number of participants	20		20	
Grand total	40			

Table 2: Participants' Descriptive Details

Table 2.1 Taiwanese Buddhist Female (TBF)					
Participants code	Age	Religious faith (Acquisition)	Inspiration behind religious faith	Type of farming	Farming experience
TBF01	51	Buddhism (inherited)	Buddhist Master, Scripture	Organic	11 years
TBF02	59	Buddhism (chosen)	Buddhist community, Master, Scripture	TGAP	14 years
TBF03	56	Buddhism (chosen)	Buddhist master, scripture	Organic	09 years

TBF04	62	Buddhism (chosen)	Buddhist community, Master, Scripture	Organic	years
TBF05	60	Buddhism (chosen)	Buddhist community, Master	TGAP	08 years
TBF06	58	Buddhism (chosen)	Buddhist community, Master, Scripture	Organic	02 years
TBF07	52	Buddhism (chosen)	Buddhist Master	TGAP	21 years
TBF08	57	Undecided (Nature-faith)	No answer	TGAP	23 years
TBF09	65	Buddhism (chosen/inherited ? unclear)	Buddhist Master, Scripture	Organic	25 years
TBF10	59	Buddhism (chosen)	Buddhist Master, Scripture	Organic	15 years

Table 22 Taiwanese Buddhist Male (TBM)					
Participants code	Age	Religious faith (Acquisition)	Inspiration behind religious faith	Type of farming	Farming experience
TBM01	65	Buddhism (Chosen)	Unclear	Organic	05 years
TBM02	65	Buddhism (Chosen)	Buddhist community, Master, Scripture	Organic	15 years
TBM03	60	Buddhism (Chosen)	Family (wife), Buddhist community, Scripture	Organic	10 years
TBM04	62	Buddhism (Chosen)	Buddhist community, Master	Organic	08 years
TBM05	66	Buddhism (Chosen)	Scripture, a teacher	Organic	31 years
TBM06	57	Buddhism (Chosen)	Family (Mother)	TGAP	07 years
TBM07	65	Buddhism (Chosen)	Buddhist community	Organic	08 years
TBM08	40	Buddhism (Inherited)	Scripture	TGAP	10 years

TBM09	59	Buddhism (Chosen)	Scripture	TGAP	06 years
TBM10	51	Buddhist-Oriented	Unclear	Organic	06 years

Table 23 Taiwanese Christian Female (TCF)

Participants code	Age	Religious faith (Acquisition)	Inspiration behind religious faith	Type of farming	Farming experience
TCF01	50	Christianity (Inherited)	Family, priests	TGAP	10 years
TCF02	50	Christianity (Inherited)	Family, the Bible, catechists	Organic	15 years
TCF03	65	Christianity (Inherited)	Family	TGAP	55 years
TCF04	58	Christianity (Inherited)	Family/Church Leaders	Organic	30 years
TCF05	60	Christianity (Inherited)	Family/Church Leaders, Catechism classes, relatives	Organic	30 years
TCF06	48	Christianity (Inherited)	Family	Organic	15 years
TCF07	48	Christianity (Inherited)	Family, Catechists, priests	TGAP	15 years
TCF08	56	Christianity (Inherited)	Family, Catholic school, friends	TGAP	30 years
TCF09	67	Christianity (Inherited)	Family	TGAP	40 years
TCF10	60	Christianity (Chosen)	Friend	TGAP	32 years

Table 24 Taiwanese Christian Male (TCM)

Participants code	Age	Religious faith (Acquisition)	Inspiration behind religious faith	Type of farming	Farming experience
TCM01	62	Christianity (Inherited)	Family, priest	Organic	30 years
TCM02	60	Christianity (Inherited)	Family, friend, priest	TGAP	10 years
TCM03	61	Christianity (Inherited)	Family, religious leaders	TGAP	06 years
TCM04	50	Christianity (Inherited)	Family	TGAP	25 years
TCM05	66	Christianity (Chosen)	Friends, lay people, religious sister	Organic/ TGAP	40 years

TCM06	65	Christianity (Inherited)	Family	TGAP	05 years
TCM07	76	Christianity (Inherited)	Family	Organic	50 years
TCM08	60	Christianity (Inherited)	Family	TGAP	20 years
TCM09	41	Christianity (Inherited)	Family/Church Leaders	TGAP	20 years
TCM10	37	Christianity (Inherited)	Family/Church Leaders	TGAP	15 years

Table 3: Environmental Consciousness

Table 3:1 Taiwanese Buddhist Female (TBF)

Participants code	Doctrinal	Personal	Priority	
			Income	Environment
TBF01	Co-existence, allow other creatures to grow on the land	Nature as mother, protect her	Second	First
TBF02	Compassion, do not kill,	Be grateful to all creatures	Second	First
TBF03	Good deeds have good rewards	Nature both as a gift and an instrument	Second	First
TBF04	Compassion, non- killing, respect for life	Nature as an instrument	Second	First
TBF05	Compassion, protect all creatures	A gift, Earth as mother, embracing all	Second	First
TBF06	Protect nature, coexist	Nature is bigger than humans, it nurtures all	Second	First
TBF07	Compassion for all creatures	Coexist	Second	First
TBF08	Earth is for all creatures, interconnectedness	Care for all creatures,	Second	First
TBF09	Protect all forms of life	Nature as a resource	Second	First
TBF10	Equality of creation, compassion, do not kill, coexist	Nature as mother, protect her	Second	First

Table 32 Taiwanese Buddhist Male (TBM)				
Participants code	Doctrinal	Personal	Priority	
			Income	Environment
TBM01	Sacredness of nature, non-killing	Humans are not masters, they too are part of the universe, co-exist	Second	First
TBM02	Protect all forms of life, respect life, non-killing	Unclear	Second	First
TBM03	Preserve the life of all living beings, liberate captive animals	Take care of the earth, plant trees, do not use chemicals,	First	Second
TBM04	Unclear	Has emotional attachment to the land	Second	First
TBM05	Protect the vitality of the earth by protecting the microorganisms	Earth as mother we can rely on for living, praise and protect her	Second	First
TBM06	Equality of creation, wholistic development includes every creature that is seen and unseen	Keep the land healthy and the plants will grow naturally and yield harvest	Second	First (for the sake of the environment)
TBM07	The sacredness of life	In the beginning nature as a source of income, but now not	No answer	
TBM08	Be compassionate to all creatures	Protect the microorganisms in the land	Second	First
TBM09	compassion, earth belongs to all creatures	Earth as a resource	Second	First
TBM10	Equality of creation, respect for nature	Life springs from the earth and so respect nature, cherish the existence of all creatures and do not destroy life, keep the original texture of the soil, use rainwater, recycle things	Second	First

Table 33 Taiwanese Christian Female (TCF)				
Participants code	Doctrinal	Personal	Priority	
			Income	Environment
TCF01	God-given resource	A gift	Second	First
TCF02	Take good care of the earth	A gift	Second	First
TCF03	Unclear	A gift, cherish it	Second	First (for the sake of the environment)
TCF04	God-given nature, care for it and do not destroy, co-exist with other created things	A gift	Second	First (for the sake of the environment)
TCF05	Take good care of the land	A gift	Second	First (because of climate change)
TCF06	Unclear	A gift	Second	First
TCF07	Respect/care for nature and nature will protect you	A source of comfort, mysterious, a gift	Second	First (for the sake of the environment)
TCF08	Co-exist	Love and protect	Second	First
TCF09	God-given nature	A gift	No answer	
TCF10	God created everything	A gift	Second	First
Table 34 Taiwanese Christian Male (TCM)				
Participants code	Doctrinal	Personal	Priority	
			Income	Environment
TCM01	Could not answer	A gift, an opportunity to care for others and a responsibility	Second	First
TCM02	Could not answer	A source of income	Second	First
TCM03	God-given nature	A gift, protect it	Second	First
TCM04	God-given nature	No answer	No answer	
TCM05	God-given nature	Protect the environment, otherwise I fail God.	Second	First (for the sake of the environment)
TCM06	God guides everything	A gift	First	Second
TCM07	Very close relationship with nature	Love and protect it. Do not use chemical fertilizers	Second	First

TCM08	God-given nature and the responsibility to take care of it	A gift, make good use of the land	Second	First
TCM09	Respect and do not destroy the land	A gift from God, respect the land and be thankful	First	Second
TCM10	Unclear	A gift, one thing that we can never lack	Second	First

NB. In this paper, 'creation' refers to humans and the more-than-human community of life. Here, it is worth reading about the difference Pope Francis makes between 'creation' and 'nature' in his encyclical *On Care for Our Common Home* (*Laudato Sí*, hereafter LS). "In the Judaeo-Christian tradition, the word 'creation' has a broader meaning than 'nature', for it has to do with God's loving plan in which every creature has its own value and significance. Nature is usually seen as a system which can be studied, understood and controlled, whereas creation can only be understood as a gift from the outstretched hand of the Father of all, and as a reality illuminated by the love which calls us together into universal communion" (LS §76). I prefer this term because it allows us to move beyond the concept of biophilia defined as the way "by which humans nourish, enrich, and re-create themselves in close relationship with more-than-human life" (Grim 264) and fosters an egalitarian, intimate and sacred relationship with the nonhuman world. However, based on scholarly expertise, terms such as ecology, environment and nature are often used interchangeably to refer to the same concept.

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