"Urban Planning and Governance" offers a view of the administration of cities from the imperial center alongside the ways urban residents managed essential tasks. "Urban Culture and Daily Life" encompasses descriptions of cities and urban life, and in this section Lincoln attempts to convey how the experience of inhabiting a city might differ from that of the countryside.

The structure of the book is logical, and China specialists will find it useful for the way it crystallizes important themes. Each chapter includes helpful maps and suggestions for further reading. Those unfamiliar with Chinese history, however, may find the early chapters particularly challenging. The "Urban System" section of Chapter 1, for example, describes developments from the earliest settlements to the Han Dynasty, but the "Urban Planning and Governance" and "Urban Culture and Daily Life" sections then jump around within that vast timespan, leaving the reader a bit dizzy. The organization and argument become more manageable in later chapters, where the time periods are much shorter.

Lincoln's textbook is an extremely useful tool, but you will want to use it with care. It is schematic rather than encyclopedic, and despite its wide scope, the emphasis lies mainly on recent developments. If you are looking for an introductory text, or if you are considering assigning chapters of this book in global urban history courses, you would be wise to devote time to helping students navigate the early chapters. More advanced students will appreciate the book's many strengths on their own. For my part, I admire how Lincoln foregrounds the historical legacies of administrative centralization, economic interconnection, and cultural production in China today while still conveying the many transformations of Chinese urban forms.

Ordering the Myriad Things: From Traditional Knowledge to Scientific Botany

By Nicholas K. Menzies. Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2021. 312 pp. $ 99.00 (cloth) $30.00 (paper)

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In his book, *Ordering the Myriad Things: From Traditional Knowledge to Scientific Botany in China*, Nicholas K. Menzies opens his exploration of the history of botany in China with epigraphs from two eminent botanists, Zhong Guanguang (K.K. Tsoong, 1868–1940) and Peter Crane (1954–present). The juxtaposition of Zhong's invocation of the importance of not rejecting past assignment of correct names to the myriad things (*wanwu*) and Crane's assertion of the temporal connections materially calibrated through trees is interesting, not because the two views fundamentally oppose one another, but rather because whatever differences there are, both statements communicate a relationship between self and natural world. And this idea that a relationship between self and natural world can take many forms and be identified,

classified, and ordered in different ways—one of which we might designate as "traditional" and another as "scientific—is at the heart of this book. Menzies' approach is a delicate one. He insists that the history of botany begins with an absence, namely that "no body of knowledge that could be described as 'botany,' in which plants were the objects of observation and study in their own right" (5) existed prior to the mid-nineteenth century. Yet he also shies away from more constructionist proposals that make nature itself a product of how people have chosen to engage, study, and analyze the world and its phenomena. His book traces a transition—from traditional knowledge about plants that could be found in literature and the fine arts, in encyclopedias and geographies, *materia medias*, and horticultural works and monographs to the science of botany. But he does not seek to privilege or characterize this transition as a progressivist one. As he writes, "My purpose is not to trace an assumed teleological progression from less knowledge to more or from irrational to enlightened. My concern is with how people choose to understand and to represent the beings that surround us" (4).

With this in mind, *Ordering the Myriad Things* sets out to show how these two knowledge systems—one that preoccupied itself by trying to understand how processes of change generated and manifested themselves through things such grasses, trees, and grains and another that sought understanding by making encountered objects the object of study themselves—interacted and ultimately became intertwined. It was not an equitable process, and arguably, one can still characterize the end result as botany's "triumph" over the older system of botanical knowledge and practice. But Menzies strives to temper such generalizations by showing how the social makeup of China's first few generations of botanists (chapter 5), their taxonomic projects (chapter 4 and 6), their collective spaces of investigation and collaboration (chapter 8), and, indeed, the material places that allowed them to engage with the public (chapter 9) were more varied and temporally textured. In this sense, one must treat lightly, for example, Yu Heyin's emphatic insistence that traditional "knowledge about plants" was different from botany (in his "A Brief History of Botany," 1903) (54) and the Chinese Academy of Sciences Institute of Botany's pronouncement that the formal institution of botany in China marked a rupture with tradition (in its compilation *The History of Botany in China*) (179). Too sharp an insistence on rupture gestures at other priorities and belies the distinctive ways in which the past was a part of how Chinese botanists negotiated the present. Some, such as Bing Zhi (1886–1965), the former co-director of the Fan Memorial Institute and founding member of the Science Society of China, pushed back against the compulsion to make science exclusionary, especially in the domain of scientific terminology. Bing argued that the endeavor to standardize and systematize scientific terminology should not reject out-of-hand older names and characters for plant families, genera, and species (114). Others, such as Kuang Keren (1914–1977) in his 1945 *Illustrated Materia Medica of Southern Yunnan* with its twenty-six lithographed plates of full-page compositions, "successfully integrated the legacy of the great classical works with the science of botany, the conventions of botanical illustration, and a respectful study of indigenous traditions" (139). In a move that suggests a mixture of scientific nationalism and deep respect for the value of names as embodiments of history, geography, customs, and propriety, Zhong Guanguang, who in 1932 was put in charge of Academia Sinica's botanical taxonomy and nomenclature project, rejected the use of Japanese names in favor of the "use of indigenous Chinese names"—rectified, of course, to follow "the rules of nomenclature to show the relationships between families, genera, and species" (116).

As important as it is to stress the complex ways in which traditional knowledge and naming practices were enfolded into scientific botany, Menzies also explicates how

botany marked specific divergences of experience and practice. Being a botanist was demonstrably and physically different from being a literatus of the past with an interest in the plant world. The botanist as a modern scientist was a doer. He trekked. He explored. He collected. (I have intentionally used the male pronoun, because there are no women in this book, which is itself curious.) Indeed, collecting was more than physical acquisition. It was a way to assert Chinese prerogative in fieldwork and on paths sometimes already trodden by Western plant hunters, and it was epistemological verification in process. Wu Jiaxu, the first editor of *Journal of Natural History*, explained in 1915,

> Collecting is the first step in mastering how to stick to the facts. Collecting is something that can have a profound impact, and it is the methodology of collecting that ensures that the knowledge obtained from research will always be trustworthy, not misleading. . . . To transmit knowledge while collecting will definitely be far superior to any amount of lecturing in a classroom (76).

Altogether, the doing-ness of botany was significant, such that even those early botanists who may have been candidates in the imperial examination system and therefore more familiar with older methods of textual analysis and information gathering found themselves enmeshed in new forms of observation and research (77).

In terms of structure, *Ordering the Myriad Things* loops around itself before delving into specific facets of scientific botany. Chapter 1 is like a distilled version of the entire book in a single chapter, while chapter 2 lays out the broader sweep of nineteenth and twentieth century history as told from the vantage point of science, and especially botany. Chapter 3 charts the differing ways in which nature (*ziran*) as self-generation's pattern operated and was imagined before intersecting with and, perhaps, ossifying around a scientific definition of the study of plants in the first decade of the twentieth century. Chapters 4 through 8 are more targeted analyses of different aspects of botany: how Chinese botanists sought to develop a technical vocabulary for identifying, classifying, and correctly assigning Chinese names that conformed with international nomenclature; what sorts of personalities and backgrounds typified the first few generations of Chinese botanists; how Chinese botanists settled on an appropriate, scientific method to order and classify; how the objectives of visual representation of plants shifted while also incorporating longer standing aesthetic practices; how Chinese botanists transitioned from being cultural intermediaries to being scientific nationalists with their own societies, publications, and research institutes; and finally, how they developed and cultivated physical spaces such as museums and botanical gardens for learning, research, and appreciation. Given the organization of the book, there are moments when the discussion can feel somewhat repetitive and static.

And as deftly as Menzies shows that the transition from traditional knowledge to scientific botany was not really a progression at all, I cannot help but wonder if traditional knowledge about plants did more than just color scientific botany. In other words, did traditional knowledge and practices exert influence as extra-scientific traces of the past, or did they contribute to the very specificity of the kinds of scientific practices and methodologies prioritized by Chinese botanists? Were they important because they offered a tie to a cultural past, or did they offer something else when it came to techniques of observation, identification, and classification? It is to Menzies' credit that *Ordering the Myriad Things* raises these thought-provoking questions.