

Preface—A Personal Comment

Just as landscape defines character, culture springs from a spirit of place.

Wade Davis (2009, p. 33).

Landscapes evoke multiple memories and emotions through layers upon layers of interactions and interpretations, convergent and divergent, steadfast and emergent, contemporary and historical. They evoke notions of place. Identity. Home. Belonging. Nostalgia (Solastalgia). Perhaps inevitably, contestation is common. Hopefully, a 'duty of care' emerges from the midst of these connections.

Just as 'beauty lies in the eye of the beholder', scientific framings that are used to tackle any issue bring particular perspectives to bear, shaping what is seen (entities, patterns, linkages, etc.) and how it is assessed. Inevitably, approaches to landscape analysis reflect our training and experience. Everything is contextual. Instinct and intuition come to the fore. What is new/familiar? How does it relate to what has been seen/experienced previously? This has enormous implications for how these understandings are derived and how they are used to inform management applications.

The Upper Yellow River is an intriguing and awe-inspiring place. Although it presently attracts relatively few overseas visitors, rapid infrastructure developments will make the area much more accessible in coming years. To date, most environmental research in this region has been derived from remotely sensed and modelled applications. This book supplements these analyses through various field investigations. Work conducted by researchers at Qinghai University is supplemented by insights and perspectives from various researchers at the University of Auckland in New Zealand, who worked alongside researchers at Tsinghua University and the Chinese Academy of Sciences in Beijing as part of the environmental arm of the Three Brothers (Plus) Project since 2007.

Writing and compiling this book has been a very demanding process, pulling together threads of enquiry from divergent sources and perspectives. Given many contestations relating to various issues in environmental science and management in the region, we have not tried to force a consistent perspective throughout the book. Such is the nature of research. Having said this, we hope that the book does justice to our own voices among many others that are not directly considered here.

Although it is not always possible to avoid technical terminology, we have tried to minimize the use of jargon in efforts to make the book accessible to a non-specialist audience.

The landscapes and ecosystems of the Upper Yellow River have their own particular magic. Hopefully, our efforts in this book enable others to share some of that magic, and encourage others to experience it directly. At the same time, we have to look after the special values of such places ...

The dark night gave me black eyes,

I use them nonetheless seeking for the light.

A Generation: Gu Cheng

Reference

Davis, W. (2009). *The wayfinders: Why ancient wisdom matters in the modern world*. House of Anansi.

Oneroa, Waiheke Island
November 2015

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Landscape and Ecosystem Diversity, Dynamics and
Management in the Yellow River Source Zone

Brierley, G.; Li, X.; Cullum, C.; Gao, J. (Eds.)

2016, XIV, 369 p. 119 illus., 92 illus. in color., Hardcover

ISBN: 978-3-319-30473-1