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*Biography:*  
  
Xiaoping Yang studied geography in the 1980s in Xian, Nanjing and Lanzhou of China and received his doctoral degree in physical geography, environmental geology and bio-climatology from Goettingen University, Germany, in 1992. He is now a professor at the Institute of Geology and Geophysics, Chinese Academy of Sciences. His main research interests: Dryland environments, specifically arid geomorphology and paleoclimatology during the Late Quaternary; global change and contemporary environmental issues such as desertification, particularly in Inner Mongolia and Xinjiang.  
  
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