Acknowledgements

I am grateful to a lot of people for assistance.

First and foremost I should thank Mark Wang. He led me to China 15 years ago, introduced me to what was going on and helped with the organisation of trips to particular places. He has spent countless hours explaining China, debating my views and helping with language. More than anyone, he is responsible for my interest in learning the things that have appeared in this book. He also was the principal investigator of one of the research grants that supported the work I report here.

Zhu Ying is another friend and colleague who has helped me learn about China. He has taken me around, showed me how things work, helped me organise contacts in places and brought me into the friendship of his family in Beijing. He organised another one of the research grants that supported my work. I thank him for teaching me so much.

Brian Finlayson has also accompanied me on many trips around the countryside, questioning and debating what I thought was obvious. Brian may have only one gear, but he is as near as it is possible to get to a perpetual motion machine.

Other colleagues have been critical and provoked me to think more clearly about certain issues. These include Jon Barnett and Peter Christoff. Jon, Brian and Mark collaborated on the research project that is at the heart of Chapter 6. He is not a geographer, but Adam Ff forde has always prodded at my loose ideas and stimulated me to think broadly and clearly. Not only as a colleague, of course, Ruth Fincher has encouraged and supported me throughout this endeavour. George Lin, Sophie Webber, Sally Weller and Mark Wang provided sharp comments on an earlier draft of this book. Chandra Jayasuriya drew the maps and diagrams with her usual patience, skill and good humour.

I relied heavily on the research and the collegial company of the research students with whom I had the pleasure of working. Brooke McDonald (Chapter 4), Debbie Dickinson (Chapter 5), Ben Hopper and Tyler Harlan (Chapter 8) have made this book possible: without them the product would have been less, the quality poorer and the time more.

Above all, I am grateful to the people in China who helped me. Especially I want to acknowledge the peasants and officials in the villages
I visited; the academic colleagues who hosted some of my visits, paid some of my expenses and arranged some of my research trips; and the colleagues who assisted my research students in these ways too. La Fu and Zanden helped me in Inner Mongolia; Li Lingbao in Xie (Jiangsu); Wang Changci in Jinan (Shandong); Duan Yuefang in Yichang (Hubei); and Huang Xiaomin in Kunming (Yunnan).

Although all of these people have tried – in their different ways – to ensure that I did not stray too far from the stones in the river, none of them is responsible for what I have written.

I am grateful to the Australian Research Council for grants DP0209563, DP0880244 (with Mark Wang) and DP0342607 (with Zhu Ying and John Benson), which partially funded the research reported here.

Melbourne, January 2011