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Cover photo. Typical landforms of the Yun-Gui Plateau, southwest China. The exposed carbonate areas in this region are strongly influenced by rocky desertification, resulting in a landscape almost devoid of soil and vegetation. In this picture, the sparse pines are artificially cultivated; shrubs and grasses are natural vegetation. Deforestation and soil erosion in the carbonate rock areas results in soil loss and vertical water flow into karst fracture systems. In these sites, the stalagmite isotopes from Dongge and Wulu caves are unique terrestrial archives to track past hydrological circulations and soil processes. Photo: Dianbing Liu. (See the article by Liu et al., pages 333–346, in this issue.)