

## **ANTHONY DICKS—OBITUARY**

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SOAS and IALS

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Law teacher and practitioner who drew upon extensive experience in Hong Kong to become a pioneering scholar of Chinese law.

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The comparative law scholar and legal practitioner, Professor Anthony Dicks SC, who has died aged 82, was a distinguished expert in Chinese law. His scholarship, rooted in years of research in Hong Kong, yielded an impressive corpus of work.

For much of his academic career he taught at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) at the University of London. Outside of SOAS, he made important public service contributions. He was a member of the Executive Council of the Universities' China Committee in London, and joint editor of the *Law in East Asia* series. He contributed to the official Hong Kong government report on *Legal and Procedural Arrangements between Hong Kong and Mainland China* (1992), a document important in the 1997 return of Hong Kong to the People's Republic of China (PRC). He was a member of the 1991 delegation, led by Lord Howe, which visited the PRC to exchange ideas with the Chinese authorities on the observance of human rights. He also assisted in founding the law school at the Chinese University of Hong Kong.

His academic writings were published in a series of elegant, insightful, essays in leading academic journals. In addition, he contributed important commentaries in professional periodicals and in unpublished professional opinions—often crucial in key cases involving Chinese law, in courts in Hong Kong and London.

Educated at Westminster School, he read law with distinction at Trinity College, Cambridge, after completing his National Service. His pupillage

was conducted under the guidance of Robert MacCrimdale at Essex Court Chambers. He was called to the Bar in 1961.

In 1962 he was awarded a prestigious fellowship by the Washington-based Institute of Current World Affairs. At that time US lawyers could not travel to the PRC and the Institute sought a foreign lawyer to study the legal system of mainland China. In preparation, Anthony studied Chinese language at SOAS and then moved to Hong Kong.

In 1968, Anthony was appointed a Fellow and Assistant Lecturer in Law at Trinity Hall, Cambridge, before returning after several years to SOAS, where he established the Law School as a major centre for Chinese legal studies—traditional and modern.

Anthony was admitted to the Hong Kong Bar in 1965, where he practised full time from 1975, taking silk in 1994. He was very important in commercial practice and arbitration in Hong Kong, and became the leading expert at the Bar in Chinese law.

After 20 years he returned to London to become Professor of Chinese Law at SOAS and to resume practice at Essex Court Chambers.

An inspiring teacher, he continued to be very generous with his time and expertise after retiring from SOAS in 2002. Post-retirement he continued to assist the school as a Professorial Research Fellow and he contributed to the Lord Chancellor's Training Scheme for Young Chinese Judges. His doctoral student, Professor Carol Tan, is the current head of the SOAS School of Law. He became a visiting professor at Ca' Foscari University in Venice. His inspirational influence endures, and he made friends and was respected immensely for his erudition and kindness.

Anthony, one of two sons of the distinguished psychiatrist, Dr Henry Dicks, is survived by his wife Vicki, two sisters, a brother, four nephews, three nieces, nine great-nephews and great-nieces, and a great-great nephew.

The SOAS School of Law has created the [Professor Anthony Dicks Bursary](#) in memory of its former Head.

**Note:** a fuller account of the life and work of Professor Dicks, as well as a full list of his publications, will appear in *The China Quarterly* later this year.

*Anthony Dicks: born 6 January 1936; died 8 November 2018.*