

## Obituary

### John Gardner (1939–88)

John Gardner died of a heart attack on 16 May 1988 at the age of 48. He was attending the Academic Board of the University of Manchester where, since 1966, he had been first a lecturer and then a senior lecturer in the Department of Government. He had only just joined the Editorial Board of *The China Quarterly* as a member of its Executive Committee, and was due to attend his first meeting of the Committee the following day.

John Gardner was one of Britain's leading scholars and commentators on Chinese politics. He enjoyed an international reputation and was especially well known to the European scholarly community on contemporary China. John graduated with First Class Honours in Medieval and Modern History from London University, having studied at The London School of Economics and Political Science. He then carried out postgraduate research on "Three-and Five-Anti" Movements as a Hayter Scholar at the Department of Economic and Political Studies at the School of Oriental and African Studies. This enabled him to undertake prolonged research visits to Hong Kong and Japan.

Although he had an abiding interest in the politics of education in China and had written many articles on the subject, John's most widely-known book, *Chinese Politics and the Succession to Mao* (1982), as its title suggests, was on the politics of succession. Despite being written so close in time to the events being analysed, it brought together the skills of the student of history and of the student of politics that were the hallmark of John's approach. He also had a long-standing interest in the capacities of the Chinese state to mobilize its people and in the state's coercive organs. In fact at the time of his death he was preparing a book-length study on the police, crime and punishment in China. Another broad area of John's scholarly concerns was comparative politics and he had co-authored books on comparative communist political systems.

Teaching was of equal if not greater importance to John than writing and research. His teaching had broadened out from an early focus on China to include delivering foundation courses on comparative politics to large numbers of students as well as more specialized ones on comparative revolutions, communist politics and aspects of international relations. He also carried out a wide range of administrative duties within his department and in the university. He was a respected and much-liked member of the university where his loss will be deeply felt by his colleagues and former students.

Being a member of a university which did not have a centre for Chinese studies John did much to try and bring together the somewhat fragmented British community of China scholars. In 1976 he was a founding member of the British Association for Chinese

Studies and he played an active part in its organization and was elected to serve for a time as its president.

John Gardner had a most engaging personality and was an excellent companion. His openness and directness sometimes masked the depth of his emotional feelings and commitment to the values he held dear. Those like myself who have enjoyed his friendship for many years will deeply miss him. He was a loyal and true friend on whom one could rely for sound advice and good cheer on matters academic or personal. His tragic and untimely death is a major loss to the diminishing group of British specialists in Chinese politics and it deprives the field in general of a fine scholar who still had much to contribute.

MICHAEL B. YAHUDA