

Professor James Wai Keung Tong (汤维强)

April 8th, 1947 – October 3rd 2020



James Tong

*Professor
Ladder Faculty*

Office: 3377 Bunche Hall

Email:

Biography

James Tong works in Comparative Politics, specializing in Chinese Politics and political violence. He was the Director for Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Political Science from 1994-97, and is the current Director of the Center for East Asian Studies. His publications on China include studies of peasant revolts from the Fourteenth to Seventeenth Century, the 1989 Democracy Movement, and Intergovernmental fiscal relations. His current research interests are civil society, gender and political participation, agency problems and control in China, and the Asian financial crisis. These projects received support from the National Science Foundation, the Social Science Research Council, the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation, the Henry Luce Foundation, the University of California Pacific Rim Research Program, and the Chiang Ching-kuo Foundation. His Stanford University book on Disorder Under Heaven was nominated for the Association of Asian Studies's Joseph Levenson Best Book Award in Pre-Twentieth Chinese Studies. It contains research that won the American Political Science Association's Gabriel Almond Award for Best Dissertation in Comparative Politics. Professor Tong has engaged in collaborative research projects with investigators from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Tianjin Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing University, People's University, Academia Sinica (Taipei), National Taiwan University, National Chengchi University, Chinese University of Hong Kong.

For more information, please go to the following two websites:

*This is the link to the home page of [wykontario.org](https://www.wykontario.org).
Right now, the home page has general postings about James.
<https://www.wykontario.org/>

The section which contains postings on the WYK Class of 1965 can be accessed by the following link.

<https://www.wykontario.org/index.php/2012-01-09-23-47-35/2013-04-09-21-06-54/class-1965>

A surer way to go there is from the top of the Home page, right below the logo and banner, along the blue menu bar, to the right. There is a menu labeled "-YOUR CLASS". After clicking on it, click on "BEFORE 1970" and then on "CLASS 1965".

If questions please contact Stephen Lee stylee511@gmail.com

**Letian Wang, James' student, has created a website in remembrance of James.
<https://forjt.wordpress.com/>

If you'd like to post articles (.docx file) or photos, please send them to Letian at beatenby@gmail.com; meanwhile you can post a message with texts only at the homepage.

Letian

Our beloved Professor James Tong passed away peacefully this morning at 1:20am Saturday, October 3rd, 2020. His wife, Marita, was with him. He is now in heaven with our Lord. We still continue our prayers and still hear his favorite song "One Day When We Were Young"



In a message dated 10/3/2020 11:43:29 AM Pacific Standard Time, rivrwd@aol.com Marita writes:

“Goodbyes are not forever. Goodbyes are not the end. They simply mean I’ll miss you, until we meet again.”

James Wai Tong, Professor of Political Science at UCLA, passed away peacefully in Los Angeles on Oct. 3, 2020 after a brave battle with cerebral hemorrhage. He left behind Marita, his companion of 44 years; Olivia and Brian, 2 spirited children he is extremely proud of; 2 most spoiled grandchildren Ava and Harrison Goldstein for whom Grandpa can magically turn into a villainous, jovial pirate; also his dear siblings Victor, Nancy and Paul, niece, nephews, in-laws, and friends.

James was born on April 8, 1947 in Kowloon, Hongkong, the eldest son of Sing Tong and Lung Mo Ching. He adored his Mom and even as a child was her pillar of emotional support. She is perhaps why he ever has a soft spot for smart, strong women. He attended Wah Yan (Kowloon), which was most instrumental in molding him into the prince of a guy, exemplary scholar that he is and for his passing season as a Jesuit priest. All things, all people Wah Yan hold a special place in his heart and wallet. He also attended Ateneo de Manila, University of the Philippines, University of Washington and obtained his PhD in Political Science from University of Michigan. His dissertation, “Disorder Under Heaven: Collective Violence in the Ming Dynasty” which won the 1986 American Political Science Association Gabriel Almond Award was published by Stanford. His “Revenge of the Forbidden City” published by Oxford led to numerous occasions of him serving as an expert witness before US Congressional Committees on religious developments in China. He was editor of the journal “Chinese Law and Government,” 1988 to 2020.

James taught at UCLA for 31 years after brief stints at Michigan State University and Caltech. A tireless and selfless educator, he was exceptionally generous with his time and resources to whomsoever needed them. Research problem? Matters of the heart? Career advice? Broke? Trouble with the law? Impossible parents? Talk to James; he will help. It’s midnight? Call anyway. The thousands of people he has helped along the way gladden his heart and comprise a veritable secret army of faithful friends scattered across the globe. Upon learning James is in the hospital, Dr. Lee had to be dissuaded from closing his office in HongKong to fly to Los Angeles to tend to James. Such is the loyalty, devotion and friendship James inspires.

James does not smoke, drink or gamble. But as the sum of all vices is constant, he makes up for it by writing awful poetry, belting out Gilbert and Sullivan show tunes and embarrassing his children when he detains restaurant waitstaff with chit chat that have nothing to do with food ordering. Blessed with nonexistent fashion sense he supported the baggy khaki pants industry for half a century and depended on his brothers for high end hand me ups to go with his \$12 hair cut (used to be \$8). Ahhh... the happy autumn fields... the days that are no more...

There will be no viewing. A Celebration of His Life will be held in 2021. In lieu of flowers, James will be very pleased if you do an unexpected act of generosity in his name for some poor Hongkong graduate student.

Sent from my iPhone



James with Mom and Dad



Baby James



Boy James at One



In Primary 1, Kowloon Tong Primary School

To: Marita, Olivia and Brian
Nancy, Victor and Paul

From: 1965 Classmates of Wah Yan College, Kowloon and their Spouses

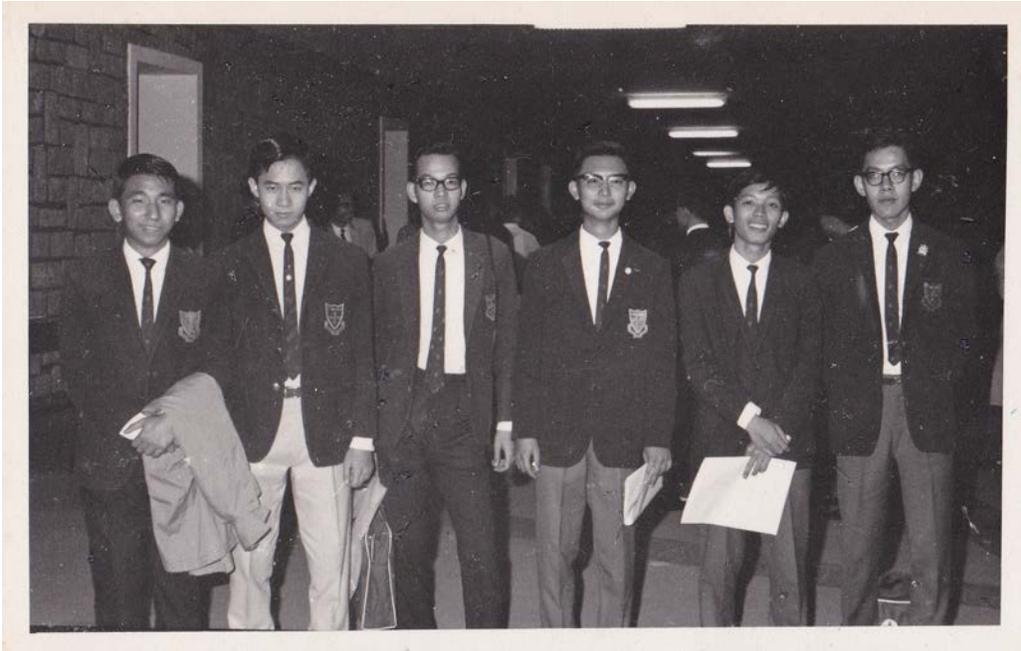
We would like to extend our deepest condolences on the passing away of our life long friend ,James.

We still remember we walked to school together, we studied together, we played and prayed together, and we ate our lunch together. James loved to sing, loved to write, and loved to debate. Although we have been dispersed all around the world, we have kept in close contact by sharing our life experience in letters and in emails and in many memorable reunions.

We can still hear James singing his favorite song : “One Day When We Were Young”



50th Golden Anniversary Reunion of Class '65 in Hong Kong



1965 Form 5 Graduation at Wah Yan College, Kowloon



1968 at Xavier House



James Loved to write Poem on Napkin



Rooster New Year Celebration with Friends





Marita, Olivia, Ava and Harrison (Feb 1, 2020)

CK,

You are an engineer and planner. Trump and most other people are not. The Chinese Polituro was dominated by engineers, at one time (Jiang Zemin era), all 7 members of the Standing Committee were engineers.

China also has the fortune or misfortune to have been hit by SARS. They have worked out the Class A, B, C, D Emergency plans. On December 30, when Wuhan submitted its first full Covid19 case report (which it has known but suppressed on December 12). On January 1 (national holiday), it ordered Wuhan to close the South China Seafood Market. On January 12, all major policy measures were set on testing, diagnosis and treatment of the virus, a multi-level medical service delivery system organized, scarce medical services and specialists allocated, hospital beds, equipment, research on the viral pathogen , specimen analysis, efficacy of intervention procedures and medicine. The entire system was ready to go. On January 14, it ordered all travelers leaving Wuhan need to have their body temperature checked. Much went into planning for the Wuhan lockdown at 10 a.m. January 23 – 46 toll booths in the 17 highways, which kind of vehicles can pass and not pass. The city's two major agricultural produce markets, 410 agricultural markets, 61,200 street vendors were inspected for sanitation and price control. The city also inspected the 2,977 pharmacies and monitor their anti-viral medicine, supplies and masks. When the city was locked down on January 23, there was no panic.

Unlike in US. The nursing home in Seattle where most of the first confirmed cases were found, many of the 200+ staff (50 were found to have the virus) were still not tested, and continue to have contact with the nursing home residents, and continued to work in and visit other nursing homes, of which 10 now have confirmed cases. The reason – not enough tests kits. Trump last month claimed that everyone who needs a test will get one. Mega lie.

But he is not a nut. His ratings actually went up, never so high before (48% last week, the Republicans were jubilant), because of his daily press conference where he appeared to be the strongman in charge.

He is not a nut. It is his supporters who are.

James

WYK1965@yahoogroups.comWYK1965@yahoogroups.com

April 5 2020 responding to CK's comments on **Subject:** Re: [WYK1965] Opening up sooner or later

There is an alternate way of doing thing right: it is called competence and planning.

As we went through this Trump's Saga for the last month, it is no doubt that he is incompetent and has no planning.

All the countries that Trump has looked down , Korea, China, etc have survived.

Why we have to sacrifice our life and our economy for a nut?

My dear friends,

Ruminations on the passing of our friend, James:

I am not a close friend of James by any means, and yet I feel compelled to share a note of remembrance. I'm sure there must be hundreds and possibly thousands whose lives have been touched by him who, like me, feel the need to share our memories of him. Even though I know James has been sick for a while, news of his passing nevertheless unsettled me.

I remember James as a very special person in that not many Chinese men from Hong Kong are able to indulge in a lifetime career in the liberal arts, regardless of their passions. James was, however, particularly suited for his field due to his exceptional sensitivity and, as he confided to Steve one time, the fact that he was a true romantic. He was someone who regularly studied his own existence with a critical and curious eye, constantly scrutinizing his own emotions while pondering the paradox of the human condition. Like many other literary scholars, he sought to articulate his intense passions via prose, both Chinese and English. I remember his love of singing and music, and how he always lent an attentive and perceptive ear to anyone's quest for knowledge, like the excellent professor he was. No wonder he was voted the most popular professor by his students.

Most of all, James has to be remembered for his remarkable generosity, especially for the less fortunate. I'm not as familiar with many others who can probably enumerate the amazing work he has done for students in Hong Kong, as well as the many causes he was passionate about. He was someone who would go out of his way in every manner conceivable to lend a hand. I honestly believe that he would not have been happy otherwise - it was a compulsion to help and to make someone else's life better which sustained him over the years. He had truly dedicated his life to the service of so many others.

I often wonder if there is anything we should learn from those before us, as to what we're supposed to accomplish here. After witnessing the passing of family members, as well as increasing number of friends and acquaintances, faced with my own mortality I sought even more to unravel the mystery of existence. It's challenging to grasp the complexity of happiness, the inherent companion of despair to joy, a beginning to its ending, hope to disappointment. We struggle during our lifetime to grasp the meaning, or lack thereof, in our existence. (Of course, those amongst us who are religious are fortunately spared most of this existential pain). James seemed to have spent time in this struggle, despite accomplishing monumental tasks during his lifetime. Recently after the birth of his first grandchild he excitedly found me in a gathering to tell me he finally discovered joy - it was a monumental discovery for him. His feeling of unbridled joy was palpable - a joy void of all fears, anxieties, ambiguities and reasoning. I was envious and happy to see such joy emanating from within him. I remember being totally surprised but deeply touched by his bliss.

In this regard, I am very happy for the life James had. A life with moments of unadulterated joy is what life is all about. We don't live to leave any legacy necessarily, nor can we say a life is meaningful and worthy only by virtue of all the good deeds performed. Our life is a journey with every day given to us as a gift - to experience the world around us, the good and the bad, the deepest pain and the greatest joy, along with everything in between, that being the essence of life - the inexplicable but necessary dichotomy. For many of us like James, it's loving, giving and caring which light up the darker passages in our journey. Those of us who are similarly inclined have to rely on it to sustain ourselves.

I feel it should be a celebration of life for James' passing. We all have a determinable length of time here, what's important is not how long we can stay, but that we have lived our lives to the fullest. to attempt all that we could, and to have had a good journey. I am very thankful for having this group of loving and caring friends to commiserate with, to laugh with and to seek support from. May we all cherish every day we have been blessed with and relish the light in our lives.

Mimie

Hi everyone,

I want to join Mimi in paying tribute to James Tong even as we mourn his passing. I know him even less than Mimi, but it was not hard at all to recognize his generosity, kindness, and humanity. I consider it a true blessing to have him participate in so many of our gatherings over the years. I still remember the twinkle in his eyes when he told me one time about the students from China that he had discovered and mentored.

It is moments like this that I find it hard to question the existence of the divine. Since Mimi brought up the question of religion, I thought I would weigh in on this. Among the hypereducated like us, it is fashionable to be non-religious nowadays since the prevailing "theology" has been the so called postmodernism or materialism, which would have us believe that everything in this world is made of atoms and molecules, plus all those subatomic particles, interacting with each other according to the laws of physics. There are no such things as consciousness, free will, or the soul, as these are all supposedly illusions resulting from the actions of neurotransmitters. In this worldview there is thus no provision for transcendence, grace, or universal good and evil. So it is when we contemplate an extraordinary life such as James Tong's and how he has touched so many in positive ways(as opposed to the current occupant in the White House) that we see how sterile materialism is, and how inadequate in explaining this world.

Hope I didn't offend anyone!
Ting

Dear James:

What an honor to have the opportunity to share many aspects of our academia aspirations! I have learnt a great deal from you! Thank you for your generosity in sharing your passion!

Working with students, inspiring them and mentoring them was a staple in your every-day work life. I want to give my sincere gratitude and celebrate the many lives that you have motivated and inspired!

On a personal note, your depth of knowledge on many fronts has brought many interesting dinner conversations, thank you!

Rest in peace and what a great pleasure for knowing you! Please join me in celebrating James' life!!

With gratitude,

Sue Li

Marian, very much appreciated for sharing Marita's message. I got to learn more of Jame's life. It must be very hard for Marita to go through now. Thankfully her daughter and grandchildren are closed by to give her comfort.

Love, Winnie

So sad & untimely....life is so fragile. Still remember him at your party Flora Zee

Thank you for sharing the sweet memories of James Tong. I am so sorry for his untimely passing. In this challenge time, he found peace in Heaven. James, we will miss you Eva

Dear Marita:

Life is never perfect but usually turn out for the best it can be.

Now James will receive his rewards in heaven – no one has ever done more for his students than James – he always willing to do the utmost for his friends and students -- at a great cost to himself. He was, is and will always be my friend and I will miss him a lot.

If there is anything that Norma and I can do, please let us know.

Howard

Dear Marita,

We are all travelers in this world on the same train; only that we get off at different stations. However, our journey has the same destination. We make friends on the train and when the friends get off the train, we say "arrivederci", never goodbye, because we will meet again at our final destination.

I will always remember James' kindness, generosity and inquisitive mind. He had accomplished a great deal and I am very proud to have a FRIEND like James!

My thoughts and prayers are with you and your family!

Love,
Gwyneth

Dear Marita,

I am very sorry to hear about the bad news on James. It seems something happened only yesterday that he came early this year to visit me at the UCLA hospital. He was telling me about how to take care of health problems and told me that I will be OK. Now he is far away from us. As other friends said, is anything I can do for you, please let me know.

Best,

Hung-hsiang Chou

自Professor James Tong汤维强教授好友CK
Chan 陈中健：“Our beloved Professor James
Tong passed away peacefully this
morning at 1:20am Saturday, October
3rd, 2020. His wife, Marita , was with
him. He is now in heaven with our
Lord. We still continue our prayers
and still hear his favorite song “One
Day When We Were Young” 陳中健 CK Chan
ckcproperties888@gmail.com“ 汤教授悄悄的走
了，但我们不会忘记他给大家带来的云彩，在我们心
中，James / 汤公永远与我们同在。KK [Sob]

Dear CK

thank you for your kind words and remembering James my brother so fondly. This happened too sudden for me. But I know James is at a good place now. that's all it matters.

good night!

nancy