

Chet Gorman: An Appreciation

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DONN BAYARD AND PISIT CHAROENWONGSA

I (D.B.) HAD only just finished enrolling as a graduate student at the University of Hawaii in September 1963 when I began to hear intriguing rumors about the exploits of one of my fellow students, a large, red-bearded Californian named Chet Gorman, whose extracurricular activities seemed to be drawn from the lives of Pantagruel and Fin Mac Cool. Unfortunately, he was overseas, carrying out a survey somewhere in Southeast Asia. It wasn't until a year later that I actually met Chet; he'd finished his survey in Thailand, and on his return to Hawaii promptly moved back into an impressive but termite-ridden mansion called Sutton's Place (after its owner, a local politician). This imposing 15-room eyesore was well-screened by a dense stand of casuarina, which suited both the respectable upper-middle-class neighbors and the denizens of Sutton's, who had further provided a haphazard barrier of dead and dying cars. Chet invited me to join him at Sutton's, and our first real get-together was for an orientation/approval meeting there, naturally conducted over a "few beers." I vaguely recall Chet roaring off on my Vespa to an assignation of some sort—just as well, since I wasn't capable of driving it. I stumbled back to Sutton's the next day to discover I'd apparently passed the test, and joined Chet as a Suttoneer.

The Suttoneers (derived from the house anthem, an old army song that begins "Eyes right . . .") were rather a mixed bag. Chet and I were the only full-time academic types; the rest were engaged in a wide range of employments, some of which drew comment from time to time from the Law. Inquiries by warrant-bearing policemen were usually handled efficiently: "Is Mr. X here?" "No," Mr. X would reply, "He's on the Big Island/working on a tugboat in Saigon," and so forth. The use of a large number of pseudonyms also discouraged persistent callers.

Donn Bayard is a faculty member in the Anthropology Department, University of Otago, Dunedin, New Zealand. Pisit Charoenwongsa is associated with the Archaeology Division, Fine Arts Department, Bangkok, Thailand. The authors comment: "In this article we attempt to convey not only Chet's contributions to archaeology, but something of what he meant personally to us and to his hundreds of other friends. Bayard discusses Chet's life and work during the 1960s and early 1970s, while Pisit describes his most important project, the Ban Chiang program, as well as the significant and lasting contribution Chet made to Thai archaeology and Thailand."

In any case most of us at Sutton's had difficulty in retaining our real names; I somehow became Captain Chaos, in company with Dog, Woofers, Pake, and the Sex Doctor. Chet, however, stayed Chet; his seniority at Sutton's had given him one of the best rooms in the mansion, which (as always) was furnished in exotic but impeccable taste, including Beautiful Woman. The unstable nature of the Suttoneers required certain extraordinary security precautions, particularly in the hours after the bars closed. I tried padlocks—no match for bolt cutters; Chet relied on his charisma, plus a straightforward declaration that he'd kill anyone who touched anything (in particular the Beautiful Woman). But the Suttoneers were usually well-behaved (at least when sober), and despite the presence of eight or ten firearms in the house, nothing more serious than a few bullets through the ceiling ever occurred. It was a pleasant if unpredictable lifestyle which made an interesting contrast with our academic life, and in the course of many wet evenings with Chet I began to learn something about Thai archaeology and Chet himself.

Chet's interest in archaeology had started some time before he came to Hawaii and Sutton's. He never talked much about his younger days in Oakland and Sacramento; sadly, his early marriage hadn't worked out (as with many of the Suttoneers), and he only occasionally mentioned his ex-wife and son back in California. He came from a lower-middle-class background, and was vaguely envious of people with "class" from "the East"—me included, even though I made it clear my Chicago slum homeland was neither East nor classy. He began to be interested in archaeology during his undergraduate years at Sacramento State College (or "Sacramento Teachers' College," as he liked to call it when talking to Easterners). His first excavation experience was in 1958, working on California Indian sites. According to Chet, the most distinctive artifacts from these sites were elaborately carved shell pendants, and he once spent a whole evening working up a facsimile of one. At the site the following day, he ran up to the supervisor bubbling with excitement, pendant in hand, only to drop it at his professor's feet, where it shattered to pieces. The professor took considerable persuasion to be convinced it wasn't genuine, and was not amused.

In his senior year at Sacramento State, Chet got the idea of doing research in Southeast Asia, at that time an almost total archaeological blank, and sent a letter of inquiry to Bill Solheim, then at Florida State University. Bill replied that he was moving to Hawaii the following year (1961), and invited Chet to join him there. In addition to studying with Bill, Chet financed himself by carrying out survey work in the islands, doing geological surveys of lava tubes, and working as an underwater demolitions man for a firm called Explosives Hawaii; he also put in a short stint as a gravedigger.

In 1963 Bill Solheim's efforts to fund an urgently needed survey of areas to be flooded by the Mekong Project in Northeast Thailand finally bore fruit, and in September Chet began research in the area that was to occupy him for the rest of his life. He fitted into Thailand well from the start; his natural charisma and personality appealed to the Thai as much as it did to *farang* (Westerners); so did his determination to become fluent in Thai (to my knowledge he was the first Western archaeologist to achieve this). He became good friends with his Thai counterpart on the survey, Vidya Intakosai, who was later to work with him at Ban Chiang. This first season of Solheim's three year program yielded apparently unspectacular results: four reservoir areas were surveyed, 21 sites located, and four sites tested.

None of these seemed to offer much promise, but Chet gained considerable experience in dealing with local villagers and headmen, all the time improving his fluency in Thai. In the final few days of the first season, just as the rains were about to begin, Chet visited the village of Ban Na Di, at the western edge of the projected Nam Phong reservoir, and was taken to a small mound which he designated Nam Phong 7. Although it appeared no more promising than the other sites he had discovered in the area, it later gained some fame under its local name of Non Nok Tha.

After Chet returned to Hawaii in 1964, his research interests left northeastern Thailand and turned toward the north, to the cave-studded limestone country along the Burmese border. Chet became increasingly interested in the pre-agricultural economic base of the ill-defined Hoabinhian "culture," and how this related to Carl Sauer's postulated "agricultural hearth" in the area. In 1965 he was awarded a National Science Foundation predoctoral research grant to investigate the problem. Chet left for Thailand in late 1965, after an extended period of celebration at a beachside cottage he'd rented on the other side of Oahu (he loved to tell of the then departmental head's frantic attempts to find his whereabouts; "Where's Gorman? Has he left yet? When is he going?"). After carrying out extensive surveys in several areas of North Thailand during the 1965-1966 dry season, he and his party of Shan hunters located a promising cave in Mae Hong Son Province which the Shan called Tham Phi Maen, now world famous as Spirit Cave.

Chet's excavations there in June and July 1966 marked something of a watershed for Southeast Asian prehistory: for the first time a Hoabinhian cave site received the careful, meticulous excavation it deserved, with attention not only to minute details of stratigraphy, but thorough screening of all deposits and careful preservation of all faunal and floral remains. Because of this, Spirit Cave was the first Hoabinhian site to yield remains of a wide range of economically useful plants, triggering a controversy about the possibility of Hoabinhian horticulture that persists to the present. Chet's ability to carry out this kind of excavation was even more remarkable given the conditions under which he was working. The site was a three-day walk from the nearest transportation; it was located more than 200 m from the valley floor, up the side of a steep limestone cliff. Camping in the cave was impossible, so Chet and his party had to make the climb daily, bringing all supplies and water with them. As they were a good day's walk from the nearest large village, they had to supplement their rice with whatever could be found in the surrounding jungle. Chet had a hunter employed looking for protein, usually with considerable success; but there were many occasions when the evening meal was boiled rice plus one or two frogs or snails.

Despite these conditions, Chet's enthusiasm was undiminished; I met him in Chiang Mai as he came out of the field, and it was clear he had found what he was looking for: a site that seemed to bracket the transition from hunting and collecting to reliance on at least some produced food, featuring Hoabinhian tools throughout. While Spirit Cave's location makes any significant reliance on agriculture unlikely, the polished stone adzes, pottery, and slate knives from the upper level of the cave suggested, at the least, contact with food-producing peoples in the immediate area.

Armed with the Spirit Cave material, Chet returned to Hawaii for a three-year period of laboratory analysis and write-up. He arranged for specialist analysis of the floral and faunal remains, and carried out the lithic and ceramic analyses himself.

These were summarized in his 1970 article in *Asian Perspectives* (published 1972), but the data appear in fuller form in his doctoral dissertation on Spirit Cave, which he completed in 1970 as well. Sadly, he did not live to complete the final report on Spirit Cave and the related Banyan Valley and Steep Cliff Cave excavations.

During these three years, Chet found time to continue his study of the Thai language; he had taught himself the difficult (for *farang*) alphabet, and was able to proceed quickly to a third-year intensive class. There were about eight of us in the class, and we spent the hours between nine and three doing nothing but reading and speaking Thai, followed by another two or three hours of reading and writing practice. The strain and tedium were lightened by Chet's ability to use the abundant punning potential of the Thai language; a slight twist of a tone or a consonant, and a risqué comment would emerge from Chet's innocent face, often making even our long-suffering Thai teacher laugh. Chet took his Thai study seriously, though; he reached a stage of fluency which later allowed him to participate in public lectures and debates in Thailand, and give interviews to Thai reporters in their own language.

In between all this, Chet somehow found time to pursue his major avocation: motor vehicles.* He always had two or three, usually in the process of disassembly or reassembly. He worked on and off with Honolulu's only Citroen mechanic (also a Suttoneer), and his 2CV's were a familiar site as they strained to make it up the hill into Manoa Valley. He spent months painstakingly and very successfully refurbishing a classic Morgan, only to have to sell it when he left Hawaii in 1969. His efforts were motivated partly by a sporadic lack of funds; he alternated between being well-off and flat broke. During the latter times he was sometimes forced to live in the quonset hut the Anthropology Department used as an archaeological lab, sleeping under one of the sorting tables and cooking on a hot plate. He claimed there was a fairly sizeable community living in this particular row of huts; at six each morning they would all be outside, washing up in the outside taps and tidying up their quarters to vanish before the rightful tenants appeared on the scene.

But most of his mechanical work was undertaken out of a sheer love of motor vehicles. I recall him once expounding on the virtues of archaeology to my girl friend, a social anthropologist: "There's nothing like the feel of dirt under your fingernails!" She replied "That's not dirt, Chet; it's grease." Many of Chet's vehicles were of rather dubious ancestry. The first motor vehicle I ever owned, a Solex moped, had belonged to him, but his name appeared nowhere on the ownership papers, which indicated its previous owners were Ivan Ho, Jim Beam, and Jack Daniels (fortunately it turned out that Mr. Ho was real, and I was able to get it registered). I had noticed my moped drawing some penetrating looks from Honolulu police, and wasn't too surprised when Chet later told me it had figured in a couple of epic chases, including the time a patrolman wanted to discuss some overdue tickets with Chet. He was short of funds, and rather reluctant to talk about it, so he putt-putted past the open back doors of the Anthropology Department, through the building, and down the front stairs, to vanish into the rabbit warren of the Manoa campus. The body numbers of most of Chet's vehicles (and those of the rest of us Suttoneers) usually bore little resemblance to the numbers on the registration papers, so to avoid possible confusion and embarrassment they

*Others included classical and Hawaiian slack-key guitar, and of course Beautiful Woman.

were usually owned by Franz Boas, Alfred Kroeber, or Clyde Kluckhohn; I believe Chet was almost up to Lewis Binford by the time he left Hawaii.

In 1969, after finishing all but the last details of his dissertation and writing one of his two most important papers (1971), Chet went off for a year's stint as an assistant professor at the University of California, Riverside. He wasn't too happy there, at least at first, so he gladly exchanged the heavy teaching load and smog for a position as research archaeologist with Hawaii's Social Science Research Institute in 1971. This gave him an institutional base which allowed him to return to Thailand for further excavation at Spirit Cave, and locate other promising Hoabinhian sites as well, under both National Science Foundation sponsorship and a postdoctoral fellowship which Charles Higham, head of the Otago University Anthropology Department, had arranged. Chet (accompanied of course by Beautiful Woman) spent most of the 1971 rainy season at Otago, offering courses to graduate and senior undergraduate students. He continued to grumble to me about teaching, but it was clear that Chet was one of the best natural teachers I have met. Our students were unanimous in their approval of his enthusiasm, stimulating lectures, and the ability he had to get students to express themselves. Chet's biggest gripe was marking; over and over in the years after he was here, he'd tell me how much he hated having to assign marks to students' performances. He enjoyed immensely the give-and-take of debate in seminars and tutorials, but equally detested the students' having to regurgitate a safe, secure answer during examinations; it was the one part of the academic system which really distressed him. Still, Chet much enjoyed his stay here; parties were frequent and lively, and Chet would attend in a variety of costumes, ranging from a guru's *dhoti* to a three-piece suit executive outfit. Then there was the time he and I showed up in Shan warrior garb, complete with swords, which somehow led to a convincing demonstration of Toshiro Mifune swordsmanship and several destroyed cushions

Chet carried out further survey work in North Thailand during the 1971-1972 dry season, helped by two Otago graduate students; during this time he tested Banyan Valley Cave and located Steep Cliff Cave. Excavations at these two sites, aided by Charles Higham, complemented the earlier work at Spirit Cave, and gave evidence of the persistence of Hoabinhian-type economies in the area from at least 10,000 B.C. to A.D. 1000. It was during a break in these excavations in early 1973 that Chet made a contact that was to prove a turning point in his career: he met Froelich Rainey, then director of the University of Pennsylvania Museum, and his research interests turned once more to Northeast Thailand.

We now come to the story of Chet and Ban Chiang, where I (P.C.) first got to know Chet well, although we had worked together on other projects earlier on. By luck, rather than design, Ban Chiang happened to contain spectacular painted pottery, much bronze, and dates which were of such antiquity as to startle people everywhere, and make them regard Southeast Asia in a new light. Research carried out by the Thai Fine Arts Department since 1967 at Ban Chiang, near Udon Thani, had revealed a site of great richness and complexity; its now-famous red-on-buff pottery had quickly become a prize target for collectors and art dealers, and as a result the site, together with others nearby, was rapidly disappearing through the unfortunate but understandable efforts of the local villagers. It was

obvious to Chet and the staff of the University Museum that the site was an ideal one for an extensive excavation, and a proposal for a joint project was submitted to Captain Sompop Piromya, then Director-General of the Fine Arts Department. A long-term cooperative program was set up, and it was here that Chet and I first worked together as co-directors.

Chet wasn't like most other *farang*; he lived and ate Thai-style, everywhere and in every way. During the years he spent investigating Hoabinhian sites in the dense, mountainous jungles of the Mae Hong Son he camped out hill-tribe-style, often having to climb hundreds of meters each day to reach the site he was excavating. In Thailand, *farang* who are really adapted to the country are called *farang nam phrik*—"hot-sauce Westerners." Chet ate all kinds of local food, from the jungle frogs of Mae Hong Son to the fence lizards of the Khorat Plateau; he was a *farang nam phrik par excellence*, out of choice as well as necessity on many occasions. Unlike many foreign students, who visit Thailand to carry out research and then never return or make the results of their research available to Thai scholars, Chet was truly involved with Thailand, and lived there for many years.

The Ban Chiang program was the largest and most complex of Chet's career, and he had his hands rather full. He was used to multidisciplinary research, for during his analysis of the Spirit Cave material he had accepted the skilled aid of experts in several disciplines to help with various analyses. In the Ban Chiang program there were both Thai and overseas specialists of several nationalities and languages. This was something of a novelty for us Thai, who had never before worked in this fashion; we were accustomed to just one archaeologist going into the field with one technician, employing locally obtained labor to excavate. But at Ban Chiang the Thai were represented by three senior officials and a host of junior ones, all wondering why this program was so huge that three senior staff members had to be involved rather than employing themselves individually elsewhere!

The results of the 1974–1975 excavations are by now well known, as are the still-unsettled questions about the cultural sequence and absolute chronology of the site. But the importance of the program lay not in beautiful pottery or early bronze, as I have discussed elsewhere. Nor does it rest on Chet's or my past discoveries, as sooner or later someone somewhere else in Southeast Asia will find something of greater beauty, or still more ancient bronze, or indeed point out flaws in the Ban Chiang chronology. Ban Chiang has a far wider importance in archaeological circles than that, and the credit for this goes to Chet.

Chet transformed Ban Chiang into a university of sorts for teaching the basics of archaeological method and Southeast Asian prehistory. Students came there from many countries; in addition to those from Thailand and America, there were Filipinos, Khmers, and Vietnamese. The Ford Foundation provided funds for subsistence and texts; the instructors were the experts and specialists who had joined Chet there, as well as Chet himself, of course. Thanks to his efforts the Northeast Thailand Archaeological Project became a continuing source of training for young archaeologists; even if Westerners are no longer involved, the project continues to fulfill its training role. Many Thai university students have worked on its excavations, and the Ford Foundation and JDR 3rd Fund have kindly provided funds for many of these to study overseas at the universities of Pennsylvania and Otago. During the Ban Chiang excavation years and for the rest of his short life Chet devoted much of his energy to selecting and encouraging these students.

Chet also somehow found time to be a very efficient and effective fundraiser, racing around constantly waging a campaign to find money to allow the analysis of the massive amount of material recovered from the 1000 m³ of deposits excavated. Even now, analysis of the materials is far from complete, nor would it have been if we had had the chance to continue working on it together, and the writing of the final report (still in progress at Pennsylvania) would doubtless have kept us busy for still more years.

Chet did not leave a large body of publications to posterity, partly because of his illness during his last two years, but also because he did not find writing an easy task. He approached each attempt with a meticulous, painstaking thoroughness. He would go through many drafts, asking the comments and opinions of his colleagues, and would often rework passages again and again until he had the phrasing exactly as he wanted it. He worked surrounded by books and journals open to the relevant spots, with a thesaurus always in easy reach. As a result of this thoroughness and the broad scope of his coverage, some of his articles have already become much-quoted classics, and are destined to remain such. "The Hoabinhian and After" was the first comprehensive review of the topic to include full details of environment, flora and fauna, as well as ceramic and lithic technology. It was also the first article to draw attention to the importance of the still-little-understood transition from the Hoabinhian to what Chet has called the Lowland Agricultural Complex, and to establish the now-accepted definition of the Hoabinhian as a "technocomplex, widely diffused, and reflecting common ecological adaptations to the Southeast Asian humid tropics" (1970a:82, 1971:300). His "A Priori Models and Thai Prehistory" paper, written during his stay at Otago and presented at the IXth ICAES Congress in 1973, and later to be published in both French (1974) and English (1977), is a classic refutation of sinocentric diffusion as an explanatory device, and deals as well with alternative models for *in situ* adoption of food production and the ties between Southeast Asia and Oceanic prehistory.

Chet's last two articles, written with his friend, colleague, and co-worker Pisit, are also contributions of lasting value. The Ban Chiang article in *Expedition* (1976) provided a much-needed overall summary of the results of extensive excavations at this major site, and will remain a definitive general article for a few years to come, until the analysis and publication of the immense body of data from the site are complete. The "Domestication to Urbanization" article (n.d.) is a tour-de-force arguing for an orderly, progressive sequence of indigenous development in mainland Southeast Asia throughout the span of prehistory. While some of the hypotheses presented are bound to remain controversial, the paper cannot help but stimulate the debate and discussion of alternative views which is so necessary for Southeast Asian prehistory today.

Chet was also a willing and very effective publicist for the cause of Southeast Asian prehistory, and its importance to modern Southeast Asia and the world as a whole. Through lectures and interviews with the news media, the significance of the finds at Spirit Cave and Ban Chiang gained worldwide fame. We should point out here that—through no fault of Chet's—the age and nature of Thai discoveries were sometimes exaggerated by the press. These exaggerations have also appeared in many of the numerous obituaries that were published in the world's major newspapers and news magazines just after Chet's death. Although such enthusiasm is

understandable—after all, reporters are not archaeologists—we should mention that Chet had never claimed that the Hoabinhians were the world's first agriculturalists, or that the Level I Spirit Cave plants were definitely domesticated—only that they represented “a stage of plant exploitation beyond simple gathering” (1971:311). Similarly, he never believed that Thailand was the site of the world's earliest “civilization,” nor that the classic Ban Chiang red-on-white vessels and bronze artifacts dated from the fifth millennium B.C.; his latest estimate on the age of the now world-famous red-on-white ware was 700 to 300 B.C. (n.d.:Fig. 1). But the overenthusiastic publicity did have salutary effects: it heightened both professional and lay interest in Southeast Asia's past and its place in world prehistory, and it gave the lie to the picture of Southeast Asia as a “passive backwater,” developed over decades by European scholars working under colonial regimes there. Chet's work has helped immensely in replacing views such as Coedès' of Southeast Asians as “lacking in creative genius” (1966:13) with one emphasizing Southeast Asia as “a progressive emanating center of early cultural development” (1969a:673). Even more importantly, his research has helped to stimulate the interest of the people of Southeast Asia themselves in their past and its place in works of prehistory and to break the shackles of an unconscious but still regrettable Western academic imperialism (cf. Lyons 1977). Chet travelled widely in Southeast Asia, and became friends with the archaeologists of all the countries he visited. He was one of the first Western archaeologists to visit Hanoi (Plate I), in 1979, to see at first hand the impressive results of the past two decades of archaeological research by the Vietnamese; they were impressed with Chet as well, and saddened to hear of his death. In addition to an obituary notice in *Khao Co Hoc*, the Archaeological Institute sent a cable expressing their condolences to Chet's family and American colleagues, and hoping that all of us—Western and Southeast Asian—would continue to “unroll the bright past” of the area, and “enhance further friendship among nations.” This would have pleased Chet greatly; written in Thai on the pack he carried during his surveys in the hills was *manutsayachat mia thuk prathet*, a translation of the motto gracing the main gate of the University of Hawaii: “Above all nations is humanity.” This was a sentiment Chet held very deeply. But probably Chet would be proudest of all of the lasting effect his work had on the conduct of archaeology in Thailand, and the changes it effected in the attitude of the Thai people toward their own past.

It goes without saying that Chet and I (P.C.) were good friends, but this article is not written out of sorrow at the loss of a good friend. It is instead a tribute to an archaeologist who loomed large in Thailand, although his age in years at his death was small. During the last years of his life he devoted all his physical strength and much of his assets and brainpower to aid the progress of prehistoric research in a nation whose people themselves were at least initially not very interested. If they were, their concerns lay only in furthering the looting of sites, the sale of artifacts, and the collection of “art treasures” for themselves and their families. Real archaeologists are few, but there are unfortunately many who know something about the field and who work hand-in-glove with dabblers in antiquities. This has created difficulties for Thai archaeology, for even if Thailand is rich in “ancient treasures,” its past is being destroyed by its own descendants. Although a *farang*, Chet was, of course, very critical of this trend, to the extent that he was hated by the Thai dabblers and dealers in antiquities, who tried to justify their often illegal activities



Plate I: Chester Gorman and Vietnamese hosts (standing) while visiting the archaeological site of Son Vi, northern Viet Nam, fall 1979.

by claiming that they were helping the nation by keeping antiquities out of the hands of the *farang!*

But Chet's main contributions to Thailand's past were positive. Through his unstinting fundraising and promotional work he was able not only to sponsor further research, but perhaps more importantly to increase the awareness of the Thai people of the richness and complexity of their past and its importance in the larger picture of world prehistory. Equally importantly, his research programs, always carried out in close and friendly cooperation with his Thai colleagues, allowed for the training of a whole younger generation of Thai archaeologists in modern theoretical approaches and methods. When Chet began working in Thailand eighteen years before his death there was only one prehistoric archaeologist in the Kingdom: the "father" of Thai prehistory, Professor Chin You-di. Chet's research and training programs bolstered the efforts of Professor Chin and his students (among whom I am privileged to be counted) to establish prehistory as a viable, important discipline in the Kingdom. At Chet's death a whole new, younger generation of Thai archaeologists was appearing on the scene, and they now number in the dozens. I only regret that Chet didn't live longer, to see the flourishing of archaeology which he helped to create. Chet used to joke that professors' minds tended to wander; hence if you wanted to make an appointment with him you had better allow for some extra time. But Chet went to his appointment with death early. As a concrete legacy and a final symbol of his commitment to Thailand and Thai prehistory, he willed his research library of over 1000 volumes to the Fine Arts Department Division of Archaeology, for use by all archaeological scholars and students resident in the Kingdom. It will serve as a lasting working memorial to him.

I (D.B.) find it almost impossible to sum up Chet personally without resorting to clichés; he really was larger than life. A man of immense charisma, energy, charm, and humor, he formed lasting friendships with incredible ease. He was at home under any circumstances, from a bamboo shelter in the jungle to a Philadelphia cocktail party. His personality covered the whole spectrum from Donlevian wildman to careful, skeptical scientist. Some may even have considered him a "hippie" earlier on, but he was never that—a hipster, perhaps, in the Norman Mailer sense, but always in control of himself rather than following trends blindly. Many of you reading this will have heard stories about Chet's incredible exploits; I can only assure you that they are true, even though I was skeptical myself until I was involved in a few of them! As he was larger than life, so were the apparent contradictions in his personality: a fierce egalitarian fascinated with "East Coast class"; a self-proclaimed Marxist who was fond of using his Diner's Club card; a vehement and active opponent of American involvement in Vietnam who was nonetheless very adept in American corridors of power; a man who often told me he should have been a doctor practicing among the hill tribes of Thailand, who was at the same time academically ambitious and wanted a tenured position very much (a goal which he fortunately achieved the year before his death). But somehow all these combined in Chet to make a truly likeable and unforgettable individual, both academically and personally, no matter what your cultural or political persuasion was. If one can be said to live on in the memories of one's friends, then Chet has achieved this; even at this writing, almost a year after his death, a day

rarely passes when I don't think of him in some context or another, and I suspect this is true of most of his hundreds of friends all over the world.

I last saw Chet in Philadelphia in October 1980; to my delight, he looked wonderful—as I told him, better than he had in years. We had a very pleasant evening with some of his students, trading stories about our days in Thailand. As he said goodbye to my wife and me at the airport the next day, I was thinking “He *will* make it, damn it!” I was of course wrong. His condition worsened in January, preventing his planned return to Thailand; instead, he returned to his parents in Sacramento. He entered the hospital there, and died on 7 June 1981 after a long, courageous, and dignified battle.

I remember Chet telling me in our graduate student days that when he reached middle age he would like to end it all by taking a boat up the Mekong until he was shot or otherwise killed. I know he changed his mind during the seventies, when he found he had so much to live for. The tragedy of his death was that all this was cut short. But at least he did leave behind a solid body of academic achievement, the respect and admiration of the Thai people, and a legacy of memories in the minds of his hundreds of friends that will not disappear. It was a life to be proud of. Chet never talked about an epitaph, but one he would have liked is that of Donleavy's character—one of Chet's favorites:

“*God's mercy on the wild Ginger Man.*”

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