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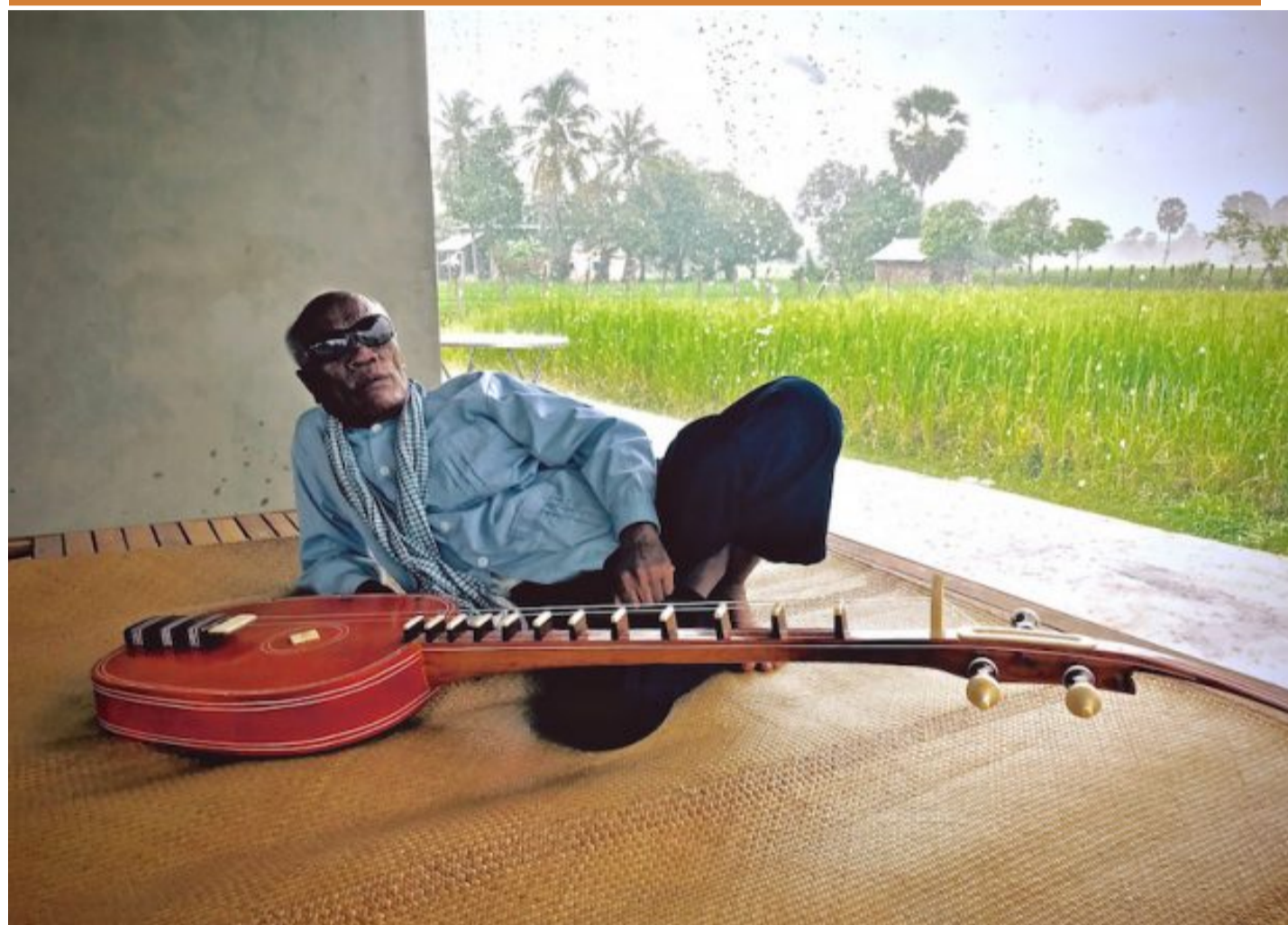
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## Fukuoka Arts and Culture Prize 2017 announced



The **Fukuoka Prize 2017** laureates are announced, with the **Arts and Culture Prize 2017** awarded to Master **Kong Nay**, the legendary Cambodian musician - Bard, Master of Chapey, born in 1944 and one of the few remaining heirs to the tradition of chapey musical performance.

Having survived the turbulence of Cambodia's history, **Master Kong Nay** has become one of few remaining heirs to the tradition of chapey musical performance, handing on this legacy to a new generation. Through his performance and composition, he has spread awareness, throughout the world, the charm and versatility of this music, and has also contributed greatly to the training of young musicians, and to the UN's human rights activities and the events to support disabled people. **For the activities he has undertaken through his music both at home and abroad, he is truly worthy of the Arts and Culture Prize of the Fukuoka Prize.**

Master Kong Nay is a legendary Cambodian bard who miraculously survived the civil war and Pol Pot's reign of terror, and even now remains active as a performer and composer. While playing a long-necked, stringed instrument called chapey dang veng, he recites the Cambodian epic, Reamker, which is based on the ancient Indian epic, Ramayana, and also creates richly expressive songs about diverse themes including everyday life, people's feelings, moral maxims and social satire. In 2016, this music was registered in UNESCO's 'List of Intangible Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding', and has been recognized as a profound cultural force whose power is felt not only by Cambodians but also by people all over the world. Master Kong Nay is the precious heir to this legacy. Currently he operates both at home and abroad: he has performed in the U.K., Australia and New Zealand (WOMAD, 2007 - 08), Japan (World Chamber Music 'Kong Nay', 2009, and 'Disability & Arts', 2015) and the U.S. (Season of Cambodia (SOC) Festival, 2013). CDs such as A Cambodian Bard (2006), Mekong Delta Blues (2007) and The Rough Guide to Psychedelic Cambodia (2014) have disseminated the charm of his chapey


playing and singings across a wide audience. On World Human Rights Day in 2010, he sang a new song for women's rights, Woman.

Master Kong Ney was born in 1944 in a small village in Kampot Province (southern Cambodia). He lost his eyesight at the age of four due to smallpox. When he was 13 years old, he began to learn how to play the chapey under his uncle's tuition, which led him to become a musician. He miraculously survived the genocidal slaughter of the Pol Pot era in the late 1970s, and despite the continuing civil war afterwards, he resumed performance. He won first prize in a chapey competition in 1982, and then in a regional competition in his native Kampot Province, and also in another competition in Phnom Penh (1991). Between 1991 and 2007, he performed his music as a civil servant at the Ministry of Culture and Fine Arts, working for peace building and cultural reconstruction in Cambodia. In 2001, he was designated 'Master of Chapey' (the equivalent of a Japanese Living National Treasure) by the Ministry of Culture and Arts, and trained future chapey players through programmes such as those supported by an NGO, the Cambodian Living Arts (CLA)(2003 - 12).

*The **Fukuoka Prize** was inaugurated in 1990 and is awarded by Fukuoka City. As Japan's cultural gateway, Fukuoka City has since antiquity played a significant role in promoting exchanges with other regions of Asia. The Prize continues to be a means of showing respect to those who have made outstanding contributions to academia, arts, and culture in Asia.*

[Laureates of the Fukuoka Prize 2017](#) were announced as follows:

## Grand Prize 2017

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[Pasuk PHONGPAICHIT & Chris BAKER](#)

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## Arts and Culture Prize 2017

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[KONG Nay](#)

Cambodia

Music

The 28th Fukuoka Prize award ceremony will be held at ACROS Fukuoka in 21 September 2017. Entry is free.

Read more about safeguarding of [Cambodian music heritage on culture360](#)

Image: Kong Nay reclines with his chapei dang veng in Kampot province. ([Cambodian Living Arts](#))

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