

# PRESS RELEASE

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Sept. 7, 2022

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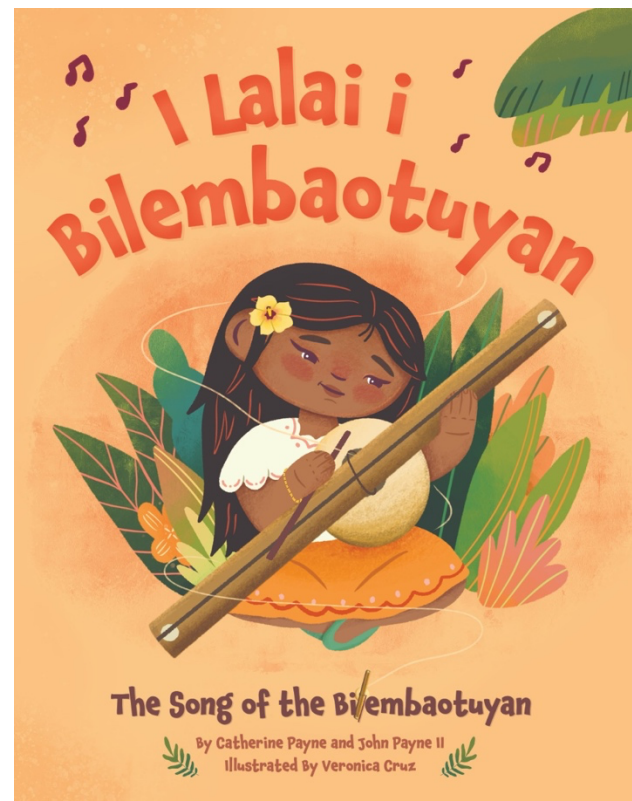
## UOG Press to release '*I Lalai i Bilembaotuyan*,' a children's book with lessons on generational knowledge and grief

The University of Guam Press is launching its newest publication, "*I Lalai i Bilembaotuyan*," a children's book written by Catherine Payne and John Payne II and illustrated by Veronica Cruz.

The book launch will be held from 10 a.m. to noon on Saturday, Sept. 17, at the Nieves M. Flores Memorial Library in Hagåtña, where there will be a reading and signing by the book's authors and artist.

The book shares the story of Lálai, a young girl whose grandfather, Tåtán Bihu, teaches her how to play the *bilembaotuyan* — a CHamoru instrument that makes a beautiful and unique sound when struck with a hitting stick.

Lálai uses the instrument to share the teachings of her Tåtán Bihu with her younger cousins, showing that music is a gift passed down from one generation to the next. The book teaches children the importance of patience, practice, and hard work and highlights the importance of elders in the community.



“For our children to have more fulfilled lives, they need a connection to our grandparents’ values, such as perseverance and respect,” John Payne said.

In addition to sharing the wisdom of elders and knowledge about the *bilembaotuyan*, the book also touches on mental health and how to talk to young children about grief, a key theme in the story.



John Payne II



Catherine Payne

“I also want children to know that it is okay to feel that life can be difficult, but we can move on — that perseverance can get us through difficult times,” he said.

Catherine Payne said she was inspired to write this story after hearing the *bilembaotuyan* being played when she was very young.

“I heard the *bilembaotuyan* during CHamoru Week in elementary school, and it has lived in my heart since then,” she said. “Once I had the writing skills to craft narratives for children, I collaborated with my brother on this manuscript to honor *bilembaotuyan* players and all other CHamoru musicians.”



Veronica Cruz

At the book’s launch, a special musical demonstration of the instrument will be given by Delores Taitano Quinata, who learned how to play the instrument from Jesus Meno Crisostomo, a master *bilembaotuyan* maker and player. Quinata has kept the tradition alive by teaching her children and others in the community how to make and play the instrument.

Plans for an “*I Lalai i Bilembaotyan*” audiobook and a *bilembaotuyan*-making workshop hosted by Quinata are forthcoming. Patrons are encouraged to follow UOG Press on Instagram and Facebook at @uogpress to stay updated on all upcoming events.

Pre-orders for the book are available now for \$15 on [uogpress.com/](https://uogpress.com/). Sales in all local bookstores will begin after the launch on Sept. 17.

For more information, please contact UOG Press Publicist Via De Fant at (671) 735-2153 or [defantv@triton.uog.edu](mailto:defantv@triton.uog.edu).

**About University of Guam Press**

The University of Guam Press publishes an array of academic and literary books and journals with a specific focus on the unique history, environment, peoples, cultures, and languages of the islands that make up the Western Pacific region. Learn more about them and their wide selection of publications at [uogpress.com](http://uogpress.com).

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*Photos courtesy of University of Guam Press*