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Kaneohe

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The hula was not something I had to become interested in. It was something that I was just brought up with. My grandmother was a dancer and she always spoke Hawaiian so it was something that surrounded me as I grew up. Eva Kanae, my grandmother was my 1st kumu.

My foundations were set by her. My family grew up with her and it was through her that I was taught all the different legends concerning the Heeia area, and Kealahii peninsula where she was brought up.

My great grandmother, Kuwahuinealii, ~~owned~~ was a woman who was kept by the chiefs of the period and she owned a great amount of land. My GM instilled in me the history of those places. Why certain places were named certain places, why ~~the~~ things were done certain ways, how & why the family took care of the "kaumaleua". My great grandmother was a seer, so my grandmother also taught the ways of the kahuna. My grandmother had two aunts named Kihai & Napoe who were chanters, and when King Kamehameha's court would come to the Windward side they would be entertained by these aunts in Heeia and that is why I teach in Heeia on Kealahii because my family has roots to this part of the island. I studied with my grandmother

for eighteen years and what I remember about her is she
great love for the hula. Her favorite was hula auwana because she was
a very happy-go-lucky type of person who loved to go to parties. I
still will always remember her going to parties and doing her favorite
hula which was "Mauna Loa." She taught me both kahiko & auwana.

After my grandmother I spent a year with Edith Kamae. I was
taught hula & chanting. After that I spent ten years with in-the-
process with Auntie Emma de Fries.

Edith Kamae taught me how to give. She was always a giving person so she
inspired me in that way to give freely of your knowledge because that's
why you have it for but also to be recognized for giving because people
will take advantage sometimes of generosity. I remember one time a kumu
had asked Auntie Edith why she taught the hula, and
she replied we are all children of God.

Emma de Fries took me into the very depth of hula. Back to its very beginnings
and foundations. The beginnings of ~~our people~~ ^{the hula} is the essence of our people.
She explained the kapus, why the kapus were set up, the kauna behind Rapa, &
hula itself. Symbolism of the different colors in Nature, the different plants.

The biggest problem we have today is the broad use of the title kumu hula.
In the old days a hula teacher was called Pa hula, ~~a person who had~~
~~begun training~~. It takes a long time to reach the level of kumu because
you must become a source within yourself. You should not have to rely
or draw from anyone else's knowledge if you are a kumu.
Kumu hula is the source of knowledge, the essence of the dance. They are
two separate levels of competency. The people of today are training
for one year when in fact they should be training for 10-20
years at the very least.

My opinion is if you have studied for 1-2 years ~~at~~ you should be
classified as a hoopili or a mimic because you are mimicking what
the teacher has done. Thus the levels of teaching should be divided
into ~~three~~ ^{alakai} categories: hoopili, pa hula, & kumu hula. A person should have
to spend at least 5 years within each division and there should be
an authority of kumu hula that ^{unifies} ~~graduates~~ each person to the next level.
In the old days a student would train 5 years ~~on one level~~ & then he
~~would paulina to the next level in dancing~~ and ~~that would be then~~ ^{that} the
person would ^{be me} ~~be me~~ paulina. Then he would train 5 years in chant ^{making it two} & paulina,
~~that category~~ Then the hale umi is the last graduation in which the surviving
students may be chosen out for selection as kumu by their kumu. It was
an entire social system of selection that hardly exists today. Hula is not just

dancing & chant but a deeper spiritual aspect must be accrued that cannot be picked up in only one or two years.

There has to be definite divisions in the hula because title must carry dignity, and respect & esteem. There has to be an orderly, credible procession up the ranks. You cannot after one year call yourself a kumu hula.

Alala'i - helper of teacher

hoopili - mimic " "

pa hula - hula teacher w/ kumu as mentor

kumu hula - mentor, source

By custom a pa hula should only move up to kumu after the kumu has passed away.

Hula is a classical art and it should be given the same respect as the Honolulu Symphony and the ballet. This is Hawaii but yet we do not have a state dance company that performs the hula.

The correct terminology for the hula is olya and it is important to keep the terms intact because when the terms change the lines of Hawaiian history become blurred.

Hula is an interpretation and mimic of the events that happen in nature. That is where the origins can be found. The most extraordinary, fantastic event was the fire and that is why the hula is tied in ^{so} much with ~~Pele~~ the goddess Pele.

~~The~~ Pele was seen as a woman giving birth ^{to land} or as ~~creation~~ ^{giving birth} itself so the dancers were called Olapa which means the beginning of life.

The reason so many rules are broken, so many terms misused is that people are afraid to admit they don't know ~~certain things~~ the proper way and so they start making up new rules. Humility is very important, but on things I am qualified to speak on, I am not afraid to speak out.

I started to teach hula in 1978. I started to teach because I saw a great need. The young people of today need help. They need a sense of pride in being a Hawaiian. Hula would be one way to channel them toward taking pride in being Hawaiian and away from the dope & alcohol that blocks this pride. So I began to teach and I try to teach them not only hula but Hawaiian values as well. Any prospective student is given a sheet of paper which state the rules of the hula. I do not allow my students to smoke or indulge in abusive drugs. If they do, they're out. What I can't stand is a student who agrees to this and does it behind my back. We can't establish pride in ourselves as Hawaiian people if we cling to drugs.

Hula is not something to be taken lightly, ~~I don't think the gossip that it~~ it is very important. I am very serious.

about other kumu & other halau. A kumu should be teaching a student to be different not common, to be striving for perfection, to try to regain his/her Hawaiianess and not to ~~limit~~ stick to what the Western side has taught us.

Drinking awa for example was for religious or medicinal purposes, not for the sake of getting high.

Kamocmoa village was a village on the Big Island where the people indulged in awa daily. One day a tidal wave ^{approached} ~~hit~~ the village and the people sat & watched the wave come in. And that's what's happening today. Hawaiians are not lazy like we have been stereotyped but hardworking and that's what I'm trying to do, break the stereotypes that brand the Hawaiian people.

I don't train performers, My students have to be content with just gaining knowledge. The emphasis today is on performance and not on the other aspects roles that the hula performed in Hawaiian society. Hula is a religious ceremony of our people, They are prayers to the gods & goddesses that the Hawaiians had and we can't get away from that.

Hula kahiko is ancient hula. Hula using the ancient steps. It should only use the 5 traditional, ancient steps - the anni, kahala, wehe, kaholo, ? Hula kahiko should only use those 5 steps.

But today we have contemporary hula kahiko that ~~uses~~ utilizes trad. chanting, & traditional instruments like the ipu and the pahu. But the style of dancing is completely different.

Hula kahiko must be passed down in its entirety from generation to generation in terms of chant & steps, because then the culture that the chant & dance are expressing is intact. There is no change. The most important thing about hula kahiko is the words, the chant. The dance embellishes the words. Today it is the dance motions that commands all the attention. Because the Hawaiian of today does not understand the language. That is why the ^{hula kahiko} ~~dance~~ of the old ~~Hawaii~~ days could afford to be softer, & subtler because the audience was concentrating on the poetry. That is why today's motions are so vigorous and exaggerated because the dancers are trying to ~~then~~ tell the story totally through the dance motions. But originally that's not how it was.

"Halehalekiauwhaahalehale" is a beautiful kahiko chant about a man who is crippled. He is called Keawe and he comes from the alii family, Keawe. He falls in love w/ a beautiful chiefess. Because he is crippled he feels she is not in love with him. He comes out his love for Kamahou.

the maiden, is this chant.

"E/keia kahela" is my favorite aumana because it says when you go, walk softly, and don't always rush to see things. Take your time.

The greatest sacrifice I've made was to live for the 20 years I trained under strict kapus. But the people that taught me were so inspiring, ~~To dance the hula~~ ^{I love to do it.} ~~It makes me feel so happy~~ ^{gives me great joy}. When I dance I offer certain ^{evocations} prayers ^{to ask} so that certain spirits to become a part of ~~me~~ ^{me} when ~~you~~ ^I dance so that they may be happy again in coming back to life ^{thru me} and that's what gives me great joy because that's what the hula is. I think many people miss this point about the hula.

Watching my students perform. Watching kids who at one time were dealing & taking dope become responsible Hawaiians with pride who now want to learn all they can about the culture. Who's appetite for knowledge can't be appeased because they have found something that is worth giving up drugs, the crutches.

I believe in ten years anybody will be able to stand up and say they are a kumu hula and if that happens the hula will be demeaned & become common. I think it's beginning to start now. The key to holding it together is for the true kumu hula to put their differences aside, come together and say what can we do about specific problems.

It is the kumu hula's duty to keep their haumana in line. If the student is abusing the hula, his/her teacher must be the one to take him/her aside & keep them in line. The true kumu hula have to set up some type of association and set up guidelines.

I think in hula kahiko, creativity can be allowed in the hand movements. But the feet movements must be left alone. Each movement symbolizes something very important and a kumu cannot add to these 5 basic steps & additional steps out of their air. I think a cappella singing can be allowed between olapa & ho'opai along w/ the dances & the chants.

That's why I appreciate the kahiko groups that stick to those 5 steps in competitions. Although they look plain as hell to everybody else, they look damn good to me.

~~The happiest moment for me was a few years after high school.~~ My cousins and I used to go to ^{friends} parties and ~~perform~~ dance 3-4 numbers. There was about 7 of us and it was nothing big but we wanted a chance to dance. It used to hurt me that my grandmother never came to see me at any of these ~~performances~~ parties. A few years after grad. from high school we had finished dancing ~~after one~~ at a party and I was walking offstage when she appeared out of the audience & gave me a hug & a kiss. That was the happiest moment in my career and I later found out that the reason she never came to any of the ~~parties~~ performances was because

she was praying for me in ~~her~~^{my} home. from the moment I left
till the moment I returned. She died a few years after that time.
Another memorable thing that happened to me was when I traveled to the
Mauis. We entered the stage chanting a kahua and usually one
person will answer. Instead all of the old folks in the audience
stood and began chanting their own kahua. They looked upon
us as part of one family and they began to cry because it
was as if we were returning to them.
The most hilarious thing that happened to me onstage was a show we did recently
w/ Patsy Vaughan at the Kailua Hotel.