

Lovey Apana

To tell you the truth I wasn't interested in the hula. I started hula at age six. My sisters took the hula and I would accompany them to their classes and afterwards they would ask me to remember the motions and lessons for them.

I had no one particular teacher that had a greater influence on me than the others. I appreciated everyone because I was grateful for whatever knowledge that they wanted to give.

My first kumu taught me my basics. She was very strict and her Hawaiian knowledge was very deep. Each kumu differed their approach to the hula and I studied with each one for various lengths of time.

I graduated from two of my kumu but I was taught that I cannot name my kumu. I consider myself a traditionalist and I was always taught that traditionally it is not allowable to name your kumu because you must let your work speak for yourself.

Aunty Kauai and Aunty Edith were never heard of when they were in their thirties, forties or fifties. It is only in the last five or ten years that they have come into the view of the public and this is because they were trained to stay in the background and let their work talk for themselves.

I was taught chants and motions. Some teachers stood up and showed me how the dance precisely should be danced. Others re-interpreted the dance differently every other day. I had teachers who had me stand up and dance and create whatever I wished and they would approve and disapprove of what I came up with.

Although I am a traditionalist I have had to translate and interpret as I see fit.

I began to teach in 1963 but I opened my studio in 1970 on Kauai. I was very frustrated before this time. I had done many things in my life at that time. I had traveled everywhere I wanted to go but I was very frustrated with my life. When I came back home to live I did everything under the sun but whatever field I was in I felt like I wasn't accomplishing anything. Finally I went to my grandmother for advice and she told me I had a responsibility to the hula and that I should use it to teach children because I had the gift of laughter.

There has been tremendous changes in the hula since I began my career but I don't downgrade or resist these changes because life always improves. The Hawaii of 200 years ago is not the Hawaii of today and we have to grow and adapt to this new Hawaii but what makes me uneasy is the lack of grace in the hula of today.

Today we have some kumu that train their children to dance like robots. I was taught that each dancer must interpret the dance in their own way but today because of competitions we have to be precise in all of our movements like soldiers on parade and that's not the hula.

Today the faster the dance the more it is appreciated. We are losing the meaning of the content of the mele and this is a loss. It is not the children's fault it is the teachers'. What makes this all so difficult is that each teacher has a right to his or her own interpretation but the regimentation feeling and spontaneity in the dance has been sacrificed for regimentation.

My hope is that what is traditional is kept traditional. If someone wants to create then get a composition that has been written today and choreograph that. How can someone take a chant written in ancient times that has no mele and create one and end up calling the whole thing ancient. There are no limitations to the modern hula but taking the old and coupling it with something modern is wrong.

~~Students and teachers must always keep in mind where did the particular hula come from and respect it for the message it has to give. Respect will keep you in the boundaries of the traditions of the culture. All people can see today is the production and not the art of the hula.~~

Today young people are going too deep into the certain facets of the culture without the proper training and preparation beforehand and they end up getting into trouble or abusing what they discover. They want to relive the ancestral ways but they cannot do this because they are modern people.



Lovey Leinaala Yau Choy Apana, known to all as "Aunty Lovey" began "teaching" at the early age of 15. Little did she realize, however, that she would end up teaching the hula professionally today. As she reflects her growing up years though, she was always involved in her school programs that involved Hawaiiana whether it was the May Day Program or commemorative honors for King Kamehameha.

While still young, she traveled throughout the world and visited "every place she could think of." Working with the tourism world and entertaining on the side, she felt something in her life missing. There was an incomplete ingredient to "level" the bread of life and happiness. Thus, "I went to my tutu lady for advice and discussed my future with her." She encouraged me to teach hula. She said I possessed the gift of laughter and patience and that I should continually teach children. She also said the hula was an integral part of our family many years back and that I had the responsibility to study hard and to try my best to perpetuate the art. This "past" derived from my Tutu Maik(t)one." I still believe she inspires, to this very day, me while I am dancing the hula and teaching. I am very grateful to my <sup>late</sup> Tutu Caroline Apao and my mother Christina Apana who have been resources to me in my Hawaiian studies. My grandparents spoke fluent Hawaiian. Today, I look to the teachers who were and are part of my life in the twentieth century, such as "Tutu Roberts, Aunty Kuchie Kuhns, Aunty Sally Wood Naluai, Aunty Hoakalei Kamauu and many others.

I consider myself as a "traditionalist." You know, the ways that have been taught to you without change. It is evidenced in my teachings to my haumana. But, the tremendous changes in today's acceptance of the hula, I have had to implement many styles. I have no~~t~~ choice, it seems, but to grow and adapt to the "modern" world of understanding the hula. As I quote Aunty Winona Beamer it is a hula "contemporary."

What makes me alter my hula styles is because people today seem to see the grandeur production of the dance and not the true value of the art and the traditions it brought.

Today, our younger people try to recreate and relive the rituals of the past of our forefathers. I recommend to them to receive the proper training, the "uniki" as this is the only way for them to be in a modern society trying to go back into an ancient world.

Above all, I have had much joy in my hula and sharing my Hawaiiana with the world!



Lovey Apana

AUNTY LOVEY APANA BEGAN TO TEACH ON OAHU IN 1963 AND IN 1970 OPENED HER STUDIO ON KAUAI.

Growing up I thought I might never find my niche in this world. In my twenties I began to travel and after I had visited every place I could think of, I returned home. I ended up drifting from one field of work to the next but whatever I did I always was left with this feeling that what I was accomplishing was meaningless. Finally I went to my grandmother for advice and she told me that I had the gift of laughter and I should use it to teach children. She said the hula was part of my family lineage and I had a responsibility to teach it and learn more about it.

Today I find it difficult to talk about my training and the kumu that I studied under because I consider myself a traditionalist. Within the framework I studied under we were trained to remain in the background and let our work speak for itself. By naming my kumu I can't help but feel I would be sharing something that was never meant for public display. ~~Aunty Kauai Zuttermeister was never heard of in her thirties and it has only been in the last ten years that she has been discovered by the public and the newspapers.~~ Anyone who has been steeped in the culture will know that this is the traditional Hawaiian way of being accepted and recognized.

There have been tremendous changes in the hula but I cannot downgrade or resist these changes because the Hawaii of the past is not the Hawaii of today. We have no choice but to grow and adapt to this modern world. What makes me uneasy is that many people today seem to see the production of the dance and not the intrinsic value of the art and the traditions. If someone wants to create in the traditional hula they must use a composition written today in the traditional style and choreograph that. How can someone take a chant written in another era, add modern choreography and call the whole thing traditional?

Today young people are going deep into certain facets of the culture and they wish to recreate and relive the ancestral ways of their forefathers. They must have the proper training and preparation or they will be lost because they are a modern people trying to go back into an ancient world.

Dear Wendee or Allen!

I appreciate this article written however, my attorneys disagreed my releasing this as it sounds too negative and "unlike" me.

I think Auntie Kauai would be horrified to see her name used negatively. I think the oral intent and written intent became too different intents. I hope you could use this other one as it is from me.

My permission was granted to use my tutus names, so therefore I am at liberty to change my format.

Mahalo  
Lovey L. Apana

If any questions call me at  
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