



Mae Kamamalu Klein

Mae Kamamalu Klein began teaching in 1984 in her home in Kaneohe. In 1992, the name of her halau, Kukalehuaika'ohu, came to her in a dream.

I started hula as a young child just for recreation, but my formal training really began with Aunt Maiki when I was twenty-five years old. I was searching for a school for my daughters to learn about their culture through the dance form of hula. Following my older sister's advice, I took my daughters to Aunt Maiki. Two years later in 1961, I joined the Halau Hula O Maiki. This was the beginning of my love affair with hula.

There was a discipline needed to become a part of this fantastic school. Through our 'auana classes, we learned to develop the mind, the body and the spirit. Aunt Maiki had a method of teaching called descriptive hula that had to do with all your senses. We learned the mannerisms of the 1800's which was the styling Aunt Maiki was known for. A few of us were privileged to learn ancient or 'olapa hula.

In 1970, I took a break from Aunt Maiki. I was enticed by a friend of mine to join Hoakalei Kamauu. I learned from Aunt Hoakalei what it meant to be a ho'opa'a and I was excited to learn how to pa'i. At Maiki's school, I was strictly an 'olapa. Aunt Maiki would give us pencil and paper because we didn't know the language, but with Aunt Hoakalei, it was repeat, repeat, repeat. She knew I came from Aunt Maiki but she didn't say I had to put my other teacher's things on the side and it made me love her all the more. She was willing to share herself with me. I later realized that through her gentle mannerism and teachings, I was building my own foundation of what I would do with my students.

After a meditation period with Aunt Hoakalei, she told me to go back to help Aunt Maiki. It broke my heart to leave her but I had to obey my elder. So after two years with Aunt Hoakalei, I went back to Aunt Maiki thinking it will only be for a year or so. But I stayed with

Aunty Maiki through the trials and tribulations of her school and in 1973, I graduated as a kumu hula.

I was finished very differently from the others. I was taken to Kaimu Beach on the Island of Hawai'i. She took five others with me but only two of us that went through that formal ceremony. The other person was Leina'ala Kalama Heine. Together, we went through the uniki and were presented in a public performance at the NBC.

I loved Aunty Maiki with a passion that no one realizes. She had left a lot with me and at the time, you don't question, you absorb, keep it and take care of it. I made a promise to her four days before she died that if and when I know how to read the signs, that I would open a school in my house. I will try to remember as much as I can and pass on as much as she will allow me to.

One day, a student of Aunty Maiki's called me but I didn't want to meet with him. This young boy found the key by coming to my house chanting an entrance chant that I had learned from Aunty Hoakalei. I didn't know where he learned it at that time, but I had to answer him. Then it seemed like everything was coming back and everything revealed itself. Through this young boy, I realized that I must keep my promise that I made to my teacher. He was my first sign. After that, one of Maiki's original student who had been hurt and left the school came to me. So it was revealed to me that I was going to have a healing school, because all the people who came through my doors were Maiki's people.

I've been teaching here in the basement of my home since 1984. I have ten students that are studying with me but not all ten will finish as kumu hula. I will go through the three phases: 'olapa, ho'opa'a and kumu hula. Their commitment to me is eight hours on Saturdays. Some of my haumana cannot finish at the top. The highest they will go would be ho'opa'a. They will be able to chant and pa'i for the kumu but they will not learn the rituals. This is where I as

kumu hula have to be strong and put them in their proper category. It's not always easy because you want everyone to finish on the top, but that cannot happen and I am learning that with this particular class.

I feel a lot of happiness when I am able to convey to the student the kaona of the chant or mele and when you see them get into it and enjoy it for themselves. You know you have touched them.

I have come full circle in hula. In December 29, 1990, I finished my daughter in the same traditional ceremony that Aunty Maiki finished me. She was presented in a concert like I was presented and shown publicly at Kihuman Theatre in Waimea. It was a very special uniki. My daughter had gone through the whole gamit and had her hurts in hula. Now is the healing time for her when she is able to create for herself but still keep Aunty Maiki's training ~~in tact~~.
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