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I have been teaching hula since 1979. The name of my hālau is Hālau Kani Ka Pahu o Lohiau which is a traditional name that comes from Kaua'i and is part of a Pele-Hi'iaka chant. It was given to me by my kumu 'olelo Hawai'i and kumu mo'olelo, Rubelite Johnson.

I was a sophomore in high school on the Island of Kaua'i when I started hula with Ku'ulei Punua. She was teaching in Lihue. She had trained under old time kumu hula, Kent Ghirard and 'Iolani Luahine. These two kumu hula were really diverse; one being modern and one emersed in the old. But both were very strict and rigid in terms of discipline and protocol.

I learned a number of traditional hula from Ku'ulei Punua so I had a good foundation to grow from. I left because I finished high school and my schooling took me to O'ahu. But I continued with my delving into hula and Hawaiian culture and arts. I also majored in Hawaiian Studies at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa.

I started hula with Nathan Napoka and Aunty Hoakalei Kamau'u when they were teaching in Nu'uanu. It was special to listen to Aunty Hoakalei and the way she chanted. Her vast knowledge sparked an interest in my wanting to continue my hula education. I stayed with her for at least a year and a half.

Uncle Henry Pa was the kumu hula for the King Kamehameha Civic Club. When I got involved with the club, I started taking hula from Uncle Henry. I thought that was really neat because he was one of the oldest kumu hula still teaching his styling. I can remember people like Aunty Sally Woods, Alicia Smith, Mae Lobenstein taking hula at the same time. Many of these people were members of the King Kamehameha Hawaiian Civic Club. We used to meet in a school cafeteria. It was fabulous being able to learn things from someone who had been doing it

all his life.

After Uncle Henry, I moved to Darrell Lupenui and Waimapuna. It was very different because I was usually in a combined men and women class and now I was in a group made up of all men. They were robust and able to do totally different styles of hula from what I was doing before. It was interesting to see the transition and to learn different moves. Darrell was founded in traditional but he was also very innovative and he tried to ~~make~~^{meld} both to make a pleasing kind of picture so that the kupuna would not find it offensive.

After a year, Darrell and Thaddius Wilson found it necessary to go their separate ways. A bunch of us went with O'Brien and Thaddius and formed Na Wai Eha O Puna in the summer of 1978. I stayed with them for three years.

I have a great deal of respect for Uncle Henry Pa and Auntie Edith Kanaka'ole because they taught with a lot of aloha and they conveyed not only what they ~~say~~^{believed through} but what they did. Their actions proved they were living what they talked about. Also both of them were fluent Hawaiian speakers so they knew of the nuances and things hidden away. They were gifted. Through them I see where language ('olelo) is such a vital part of hula, ~~and that without~~ proper 'olelo, how can you have proper hula?

"E a'o mai i ka 'olelo Hawai'i o'e ke kahi o'e ka mea mua, e a'o mai ka hula o kou aina." Language is the key that opens doors. These passages that allow us to shed light on things. We will never know everything; that's the beauty of the hula and the mele. I will never know everything so I need to continually push myself to upgrade my skills in language. Now more so than ever, I am very happy to be able to watch other people do their hula and enjoy what they are trying to do and share.

For me when I think of traditional hula, I look for a hula or mele that has some kind of foundation; some kind of link with the past. Traditions are like an unbroken piece of thread. It

connects every era and that thread is going to continue into the year 2000. It will be linked back to us and back to whoever was before us. Tradition has some kind of grounding or basis of the past and it is carried on.

I enjoyed being able to share what little I know of hula and the Hawaiian culture and history with my haumana. I will always want to see hula keep on growing positively.