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My grandmother, Eva Kanae, was a dancer so the hula was something that surrounded me as I grew up. She only spoke Hawaiian and it was through her that I was taught the foundations of my hula and the history of Heeia and Kealahi. I spent eighteen years with my grandmother and she instilled in me a great love for hula kahiko and auwana.

After my grandmother, I spent a year with Edith Kanakaole. Aunty Edith taught me how to give. I remember one time she was asked why she taught the hula to the haole and she replied because we are all God's children. She made me aware of the disadvantages of being too generous but she inspired me to give out because that's why I was given the knowledge.

After Aunty Edith I spent ten years with Aunty Emma deFries who took me to the very depth of the hula, back to its very beginnings and foundations. She said that the beginnings of the hula is the essence of our people and she explained the workings of the kapus to me, and the symbolism of the different colors and plants in Nature.

I began to teach in 1978 in Heeia and Kealahi because my family has roots there. I don't train performers, my students have to be content with just gaining knowledge. Hawaiians are not lazy like we have been stereotyped and that's what I've been trying to do, break the stereotypes that brand the Hawaiians.

The biggest problem we have today is the broad use of the title of kumu hula. The people of today are training for one or two years when in fact they should be training for ten to twenty years. There has to be definite divisions in the hula because the title of kumu must carry dignity. There has to be an orderly, credible procession up the ranks.

My opinion is that the levels of study in the hula should be divided into four categories. The beginning students should be called a hoopili because they are mimics of their teacher. ~~The intermediate student should be called an alakai or helper, and a senior student should be called a pa hula and allowed to teach with the kumu acting as a mentor.~~ In order to reach the level of kumu hula a student would have to become a resource within him or herself and not have to rely on anyone else for knowledge. A student should have to spend at least five years within each division and there should be an authority of kumu hula that would uniki each student to the next level.

Hula is not just dancing and chanting but a deeper spiritual aspect which must be accrued by the student and cannot be picked up in one or two years. In the days of our ancestors, a student would train five years in dancing and that duration of time would be called a palima. ~~Students would train another palima in chanting and those who qualified would be allowed to train for a final graduation called a hale umi in which the best students would be chosen by kumu to be trained as kumu.~~ By custom the pa hula would only move up to the level of kumu hula after the passing away of their kumu. It was an entire social system of selection that hardly exists today. I think what's starting now is that anybody can stand up and say they're a kumu hula and if it continues the hula will be demeaned and become common. ~~The key to holding it together is for the true kumu hula to come together and put aside their differences.~~

Today it is the dance motions in kahiko that command all the attention because the Hawaiian of today does not understand the language. That's why today's motions are so vigorous and exaggerated. The dancers are trying to tell the story totally through the motions of the dance. Hula kahiko must be passed down in its entirety from generation to generation because only then does the culture that the kahiko is expressing remain intact. Hula is a religious ceremony to the Hawaiian gods and goddesses of our ancestors and we can't get away from that. I think creativity can be allowed in the hand movements but the five basic foot movements must be left alone. Each movement symbolizes something important and if they are embellished then we have blurred the lines our history.

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Frank Hewett

Frank Hewett was born and raised in Heeia, Oahu ~~and founded his school~~
~~and currently resides in Waimanalo.~~
and established his halau Kawaiokapuaokalani kahiko olapa in 1978.

The young people of today need help. They need a sense of pride in being Hawaiian and hula is a way to channel them away from the dope and alcohol that blocks this pride. How can we establish ourselves as Hawaiian people if we continue to cling to drugs?

My grandmother, Eva Kanae, was a dancer so the hula was something that surrounded me as I grew up. She only spoke Hawaiian and it was through her that I was taught the foundations of my hula and the history of Heeia and Kealahi. I spent eighteen years with my grandmother and she instilled in me a great love for hula kahiko and auwana. She was a very happy-go-lucky person and I will always remember the look on her face when she danced a favorite hula like "Maunaloa".

After my grandmother, I spent a year with Edith Kanakaole. Aunt Edith taught me how to give. I remember one time she was asked why she taught the hula to the haole and she replied because we are all God's children. She made me aware of the disadvantages of being too generous but she inspired me to give out because that's why I was given the knowledge.

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Lead in

Frank Hewett
Kaneohe
Feb 22 1954

raw material

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, was my grandmother and she was my first 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 Heeiea area and Kealahou peninsula where she was brought up. My great grandmother, Kuwahinealii was a woman who was kept by the chiefs of the period and she owned a great amount of land. My grandmother instilled in me the history of those places.

teaching
Why certain places were named certain names, why things were done certain ways, how and why the family took care of the haumakua. My great grandmother was a seer so my grandmother also taught the ways of the kahuna. My grandmother had two aunts named Kihei and Napoe who were chanters and when King Kamehameha's court would come to the Windward side they would be entertained by these aunts in Heeiea and that is why I teach in Heeiea or Kealahou 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 that she had a 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 will always remember her going to parties and doing her favorite hula which was Mauna Loa. She taught me both the kahiko and auwana.

After my grandmother I spent a year with Edith Kanakaole. I was taught hula and chanting. After that I spent ten years in the process with Aunt Emma deFries.

Edith Kanakaole 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. She also taught me to be recognized for giving because people will take advantage some times of generosity. I remember one time a kumu had asked Aunt 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 the hula is the essence of our people. She explained the kapus and why the kapus were set up, the kauna behind Olapa and hula itself. Symbolism of the different colors in Nature and 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 a pa hula. 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. There 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 one or two years 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 four categories: hoopili, alakai, pa hula, and kumu hula. A person should have to spend at least five years within each division and there should be an authority of kumu hula that unites each person to the next level.

In the old days a student would train five years in only dancing and that would be one pa lima. Then he would train another five years in chanting which would make it two pa lima. The surviving students would train for a final graduation called a hale ume in which the best students would be chosen out by the kumu to be trained as kumu.

It was the entire social system of selection that hardly exists today. Hula is not just dancing and 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 the title must carry dignity. There has to be an orderly credible procession up the ranks. You cannot after one year call yourself a kumu hula. Alakai-helper, hoopili-mimic of teacher, pa hula-hula teacher with kumu as mentor, kumu hula-mentor and source.

By custom a pa hula should only move up to kumu only 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 olapa 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 the goddess Pele.

Pele was seen as a woman giving birth to land or as giving birth itself so the dancers were called olapa which means the beginning of life. The reason so many rules are broken is because so many terms are misused so that people are afraid to admit they don't know 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 and alcohol that blocks this pride. So I began to teach and with I try to teach them not only hula but Hawaiian values as well. Any prospective student is given a sheet of paper which states the rules of the halau. 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. It is very important. I am against young people barhopping and wahapalu about other kumu and other halaus. A kumu should be teaching a student to be different not common, to be striving for perfection, to try to regain their Hawaiianess and not to 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. Kamaoamao Kamoamao was a village on the Big Island where the people indulged in awa daily. One day a tidal wave approached the village and the people sat and awa watched the wave come in. And that's what's happening today. Hawaiians are not lazy like we have been stereo-typed but hardworking and that's what I'm trying to do, break the stereotype that brands 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 roles that the hula performed in Hawaiian society. Hula is a religious ceremony of our people. There they are pray3ers to the gods and goddesses that the Hawaiians had and we can't get away from that.

The kahiko is ancient hula. Hula using the ancient steps. It should only be the five traditional ancient steps: the ami, kahela, uehe, kaholo, ?

But today we have contemporary hula kahiko that utilizes traditional chanting and 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 and steps because then the culture that the chant and 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 command all the attention because the Hawaiian of today does not understand the language. That is why the kahiko of the old days could afford to be softer and subtler because the audience was concentrating on the poetry of the chant. That is why today's motions are so vigorous and exaggerated because the dancers are trying to tell the story totally through the dance motions.

Halehalekeakohaheheku 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 with a beautiful chiefess. Because he is crippled he feels like he is not going to fall in love with her. He pours out his love for Kamakaea the maiden in this chant. Heeia Kahela is a my favorite awana 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 kapu. But the people that taught me were so inspiring. I love to do dance the hula. It makes me feel so happy when. When I dance I offer certain evocations and prayers to ask certain spirits to become a part of me when I dance so that they may be happy again in coming back to life through me. That's what gives me great joy because that's what the hula is.

audrey

I think many people miss the point about the hula.

Watching my students perform. Watching kids who at one time were dealing and 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 and the other crutch 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 and 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, the teacher must be the one to take him or her aside and keep them in line. The true kumu hula has 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 five basic steps additional steps out of thin air. I think accapella singing can be allowed between olapa and hoopaa along with the dances and the chants.

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

My cousins and I used to go to friends parties and dance three or four numbers. There was about seven 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 parties. A few years after graduation from high school we had finished dancing at a party and I was walking offstage when she appeared out of the audience and gave me a hug and 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 performances was because she was praying for me in our home from the moment I left till the moment I returned.

She died a few years after that