

Nana I na loea hula
Kumu Hula: Hokulani-Padilla
Interviewer: Lovina Le Pendu
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My full name is Hokulani, Haila, Hi'ileialii Holt-Padilla. I usually go by Hokulani Holt-Padilla (in the book) ok! Make the full name . I teach in Wailuku Maui, right now we are using a warehouse space but in Wailuku Maui. Currently I have approximately 30 in beginner and advance level. I do not teach children at this time, however I have in the past and have also taught men before, but at this time I don't have male, it is only female, adult women. I have been teaching approximately 24 years though I have had the halau since 1976. Prior to that I was teaching for the State Foundation on Culture and the arts in thier I am not sure what it was called at that time but in its Hawaiian heritage program. When I was about 19 about 1969-1970, the State Foundation began this program in which they were encouraging the development of kumu hula and that time I began learning with Hoakalei Kamanu and I was living out in Waimanolo at that time. My folks are still in there but she began this program to help to develop kumu hula, I was with for about 1 and a half years. I began teachiing through the State Foundation and through Hoakalei until in 1975. I moved to Maui, (WITH HOAKULII?) About 1969 to 1974 because right around there then I got married and I had my baby and we moved to Maui. Right around that time, it was through the State Foundation, I am not sure how long the program continued but we continued with her for that full length of time and I do know it was started to develop dancers to become kumu hula. (HOW MANY WERE YOU?) We started with about 30, she used to teach in different areas like she will come to Waimanalo and then goes up at Kalihi. We had another class I think in Kaneohe, so she will go to different areas and then later on we all know that students usually thinik everything is wonderful and then they drop off by the way side and so other side started dwindling. So she will bring us all together in the one place up in Nuuanu. (DO YOU REMEMBER SOME NAMES?) Lemomi Ho Kan, Ceci Lucy, Aunty

Freida Gromes, Jan Yoneda, Nathan Napoka, Denis Keawe,.. (NAME OF YOUR HALAU?) "Pa'u o Hiiaka". When I move to Maui back in 1975 I started to look for a halau to belong to, but when I was there I found in Maui at that time, Very few people did kahiko and that was my specialty. I love kahiko, so talking over this with my mother, she was the one that encouraged me to begin my own halau. So when I was back home here at Waimanalo, she and I we spend several weekends talking about that we began thinking about a name for the halau and for several reasons I chose the name; one my mother's family has always been ocean people and the pa'u o Hiiaka is a beach plant. It is also a native hawaiian plant and because we do native hawaiian things, we choose that as our symbol. It is a medicinal plant and the story about how this plant got its name, it was from the Pele and Hiiaka myth. It tells of Pele going down to the beach with her baby sister Hiiaka i ka poli of Pele in the early morning and leaving her sister up by the beach and went out into the water to surf and swim and enjoy the ocean and then she began to notice the sun was getting warmer, and she thought about her sister when she went back to where she had lied, her sister she found that a small beach plant had grown to cover the baby to protect it from the sun and so Pele gave that small beach plant the name Pa'u o Hiiaka in the skirt of Hiiaka in Pele and Hiiaka stories Hi'iaka's Pa'u or her shirt is magical and it can defeat enemies and it was her protection as she traveled through the islands so for all those reasons we thought it was a good symbol to have. (YOU TEACH BOTH?) Both Kahiko and auana. (OLI?) I teach mele hula as well as oli.. (HOW MANY STUDENTS DO YOU HAVE TODAY?) I have approxiamtely 30, they are female adults, beginner and advanced. I haven't yet developed an intermediate class yet, most of the time if I see a beginner with promise and move along quickly, I just bump them right up to move along a little faster, then have them join the advanced class.. (WHAT AGE DID YOU START HULA?) Well I usually tell people that I don't know, hula has always been a part of my life. I have pictures from my tutu dancing hula, my aunties. My

mother tells me that I danced very young but the age I am assuming probably like 4 or 5. I really don't know, I never asked them the exact age mostly because I was living with my tutu that time when I was little so my mother was here in Honolulu... So I will say from a child..

(FIRST TEACHER?) My first teacher was my tutu who was "Aida Pakulani Long", then my aunty Kahili Cummings and of course my mother is just like constantly through all of that as well and there I started as I call my formal learning from Hoakalei approximately 1969. In addition to those teachers, I have had the great fortune through the State Foundation Council on Hawaiian Heritage to participate in many of the hula workshops that they have had throughout the state during those years and because of these hula workshops, I have been able to learn from people like aunty Edith Kanaka'ole and her daughters Nalani and Pualani. Uncle Henry Pa used to come to our rehearsal with Aunty Hoakalei and teach us there. I also had the great fortune of working with Aunty Iolani Luahine because that was Aunty Hoakalei's aunty so Aunty Lo often came to do things with us. Aunty Sally Woods, the same thing, she will come up to the halau and teach us particular dances - oh I forgot to add that list of students that was with Hoakalei at that time was Edith McKenzie was with Hoakalei at that time..

(WITH YOUR GRANDMOTHER? DO YOU REMEMBER HER STYLE?) Well my aunty and grandmother style of teaching was you watch, you listen and you follow. There wasn't a whole lot of in depth explanation of what you were doing. You were expected to know it. I don't know how you were expected to know it.. She will explain some things but not like what I do for my students now. (SHE TAUGHT KAHIKO ONLY?) Not Kahiko only, auana a great deal, and a little kahiko. My interest and my love for kahiko grew with Aunty Hoakalei. So with my tutu it was very disciplined, again no fooling around. When you start to dance you just dance and it is time to dance when she is ready to dance. The styling I don't know how to describe the styling, to me when I look at the different styles now it is kind of half way between the strong bombastic Hawaii styling to me the Oahu style is a little bit more

flowing, it was kind of half was in between. We were encouraged to dance low and what is now call "iha'a" but we were also encouraged to utilise our body fluently, so to me as I look at the styles today it is quite of half way between what comes out of Hawaii and comes out of Oahu.

(WITH OUR TUTU WAS IT ALONE OR HALAU?) Both! A lot of times it was when they were in the mood, because I lived with them when they were in the mood it was ok! Get up it is time to dance and then my aunty also had a group of dancers most of it was made up with my cousins and the people that lived in the neighborhood then it will be also like twice a week structure as well so by the time I was about maybe 8th or 9th grade I guess you would consider me like her alaka'i. She will work out her choreography with me with my body and then when the other dancers came, I would be the alaka'i for the class. (ABOUT YOUR MOTHER?) Most of the time that we began working together was when I was in high school, because by that time I had return back to Oahu, almost completely prior to that I was going back and forth between Oahu and Maui, but about high school my tutu moved to Oahu to stay with my other aunty a while and I remain for the most part here in Oahu. That time I worked more with my mother. (REMEMBER SPECIAL MEMORY IN THE TIME OF YOUR HULA TRAINING?) One particular event and I think because hula was always there it wasn't a separate thing for example where my tutu was ready to talk about hawaiian cultural things. I was fortunate to be there so that when she shared stories, when we will go down to the beach, when we go up into the mountains, it was just a natural part of her conversation that these things came up and they were all built upon my learning knowledge so now I can draw up those things that has been shared at that time maybe as we talk along a little more. I might get a flash of something that really sticks out in my mind. (DID YOU UNIKI FROM THEM?) Per say as I see what other people call uniki, I would say no. When I talked to my mother about that when I was ready to begin the halau, I asked her about that, she told me that it was not necessary because there was no beginning and it was in the family. It was not necessary

to go through a formal ceremony. I do recall although my tutu never mentioned it, I do recall that she must have had gone through a formal uniki because we used to make partys a lot because we had lots of cousins, lots of uncles and aunties, so we always had kalua pig and make luaus quite a bit for the family and I would see her sometimes eating particular parts of the pig when she thought that no one was watching, so as a formal ceremony per say I would to say "no" again. When I talked to my mother she said it is enough that you go ahead and do it because I know that your tutu would have wanted that because my tutu had already passed away by the time I had wanted to start. (HOW DID YOU BECOME A TEACHER?) Well, I have been thinking about that a while because I come from what I know of I am seen it is a 3rd generation kumu hula perhaps even more generation from that, but I haven't pursued that with my aunties and my mother so my mother comes from a family of 15 so in my generation, I had 40 + cousins of these 40 first cousins, I am the only one that teaches. All of my cousins learned how to dance, but I am the only one that teaches. Becoming a teacher was a conscious decision, first of all I wanted to be a good dancer and then as I started teaching or learning with Hoakalei, knowing that this program will be to develop future teachers and as she began to teach us how to teach I found that it was something that I like to do and so it just kind of happened. I mean I could had not done anything with it but, I always wanted to share my love for the hula with others and to have others love and enjoy the hula as much as I do.. (WITH HOAKALII?) What happened is Hoakalii came to the Waimanalo Hawaiian Civic Club and told them about this program that she was doing and asked if there was any people from the civic club organization who might want to participate in this program. Well, my mother belong to this Wiamanalo Civic club, she came home and she told me about it and of course she knew Hoahalei because of Aunty lo and my mother also danced with Aunty lo for a while. So I said why not, I give it a try so that's how I started. I started in Waimanalo, Hoahalii will come and teach us on the weekly basis until the class dwindled quite a

bit and so there she asked me to go and join her up at Nuuanu where we moved up with everyone else in Nuuanu.. (CLASSES AT THAT TIME?) Specifically kahiko, the emphasis was kahiko maybe for the first 3 years, maybe more we did nothing but kahiko. It was like a regular halau. I assume again I haven't been in a regular halau prior to that because it always had been my family. I think so it was like a regular halau class we would come in. We will do little bit of chanting, do primary hula, Hoakalei will teach without any paper or tape recorder. You just are to pay attention, listen, follow, etc.. talk and explain and then where we got the choreography part down then she would pass out the papers and we would sit and do the ho'oa'a part and learn the accompany myth.. so for the most part was how the class will run, after awhile some new students will come in occasionally then she would ask certain ones of us to take this group at another area and teach them this hula and whatever he teaching cause while I was still studying with her and she would come when it was time for me to have my own class. We arrange for the classes to be like Waimanalo or Kailua or Kaneohe and then I remeber I had one in Kaimuki. Then she would come like maybe for the first couple of classes and observe and she'd give me feedback, she will leave me alone and she will come back and maybe few weeks later, maybe a few months later to check me again. The classes were for schools and the general public, evening classes classes usually done in school cafeterias and open to the general public. (THE MOST INFLUENCE FROM THE TEACHERS?) My mother. It was my mother who really,..Hoakalei taught me how to teach. My mother taught me how to be a kumu hula. She taught me the little things on the quality of movements, the dress, the philosophy, you know those kinds of things she taught me how to take responsibility for the needs of my students, basically having to do with philosophical behaviors of kumu hula and their relationship to their students. This was later on, after I had matured a little, because when I was younger, I thought I knew everything. (ABOUT YOUR STYLE?) I have my family style mostly, lots of hip movement, lots of upper body

movement in expression. I'd say up beat not too fast. I try to pass on a group of dances as they were taught to me by my various teachers by Hoakalei, by my mother, but then I also feel that what makes a kumu hula a kumu hula is that they have this creativity within them as well. So there are hula kahiko as well as auana that I choreograph new, so I do both. (DO YOU COMPOSE?) Yes, I would say kahiko because I haven't developed my music styling yet; I had compose poetry and given to others to compose the music because I just haven't worked on my music styling yet. (ANY DIFFICULTIES?) Hula is a very demanding, if you want to call it profession, activity whatever, when a person decides that they want to make hula a major portion of their life. Their life is taking up with all aspects of hula, not only for choreography, but studying, costume making, lei making, performances, competitions, la la la and if we are not careful it can put a strain on our personal life as well. I had been very fortunate that my children are very supportive of my hula and they participate in .. hula becomes a family thing. Now as far as a major difficulty, I can't think of anything of this moment. (WHAT WERE THE REQUIREMENTS FOR YOU TO BECOME A KUMU?) Strong emphasis on personal discipline, a strong emphasis on listening and, observing, strong emphasis on being aware of experiences that were around you that would then feed into your understanding of Hawaiiana so that come the time you are ready to teach and choreograph and draw with in those reserves that you have. Then you have to put together a presentation. It is all there already with you, but I do recall that major emphasis was discipline your basic, shut your mouth, open your eyes, open your ears, and ask questions only when you have been given the approval to do so. (AS A TEACHER YOUR GREATEST ACCOMPLISHMENT?) As a teacher my greatest accomplishment is to see my dancers who have been with me for 7 or 8 or 9 years still love the hula. They have families, they have children, they have husbands and wives, and they still love the hula. Hula still gives them great pleasure. (CAN YOU DESCRIBE CLASS IN YOUR HALAU?) It follows pretty much how

I learned with Hoakalei in a structured halau way. Like I said it wasn't until I went with Hoakalei that I was in a structured halau and that is like on a common day. When the dancers come in we do a no'no'o pono which is a type of meditation. We meditate in places that are close to nature that we already visited. Some of these places and I had made my dancers aware of what they are to utilize which are all their senses and we come back into the halau they can draw upon these experiences. Where we no'no'o in the building rather than outdoors, so we no'no'o pono first then we do a couple of chants to continue the mind preparation so that by the time that we finish with no'no'o pono and these couple of chants their mind is focus on hula or on hawaiian things and they no longer worry about. "Oh the kids did not get picked up" or what and then what I had incorporated this year before we use to do basic hula steps for warm ups. This year what I have incorporated, we do steps arobics in hawaiian, because in watching step arobics prior to this, it builds up wind, stamina, legs which are all the kind of things that you need for hula so I decided to incorporate that into their regular hula class. Then after step arobics, then they put on their pa'u and then we begin basics. Basics can go for 45 minutes or so, and then we go into choreography..depending where we are in this choreography. If we are finishing something than we might do ho'opa'a, then I will teach them the ho'opa'a part. The words, the chant, I require a certain amount of memorization in the chants and then the 2 hours just fly by.. (SAME AS HOAKALEI?) Basically..with the additions of more chants and the step arobics. In a presentation I do not use them as ho'opa'a, I teach it to them so they are aware of that part of the presentation or the dance, but not per say to be chanters... (ARE YOU GROOMING THEM TO BE KUMU HULA?) I would hope so, I have a couple of alaka'i and I would like to groom them to be kumu hula and slowly but surely we are doing the same thing that my tutu will do for me and that's gain many experiences, because for me I take the term kumu hula very seriously. Probably more than the general community, not more than the hula community. In that I feel it is a big responsibility

to be a source of knowledge related to hula. Now the community, the general public community has just given the term kumu hula to one that teaches hula. For me, if I am going to develop a person to be a kumu hula, they must be able to do things like of course dance kahiko, dance auana, be able to ho'opa'a, be able to choreograph. I will encourage them to be able to be familiar with the language, most of my dancers I'll say about 1/3 of them speak hawaiian and I encourage them to learn the hawaiian language through the halau as well as outside of the halau. They need to be able to costume, what kinds of costumes are appropriate for what kinds of dances, to be able to make implements, to be able to make accessories like their leis, ect. to know what some of the ceremonies or rituals there are in relationship to hula and the halau, whether they chose to do that it is up to them but they need to do what they are. (WOULD YOU UNIKI?)

Someday. (HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN UNIKI?) For me uniki is a major movement from one section or type of learning into another, so I would be so I would go into 2 or 3 kinds of uniki and the first two would be a little less formal than the last one. A dancer might uniki as a dancer first as a olapa first and when I do that, that means that this person can do anything, any type of dancing, kahiko, auana, implements they know how to dance with kalaau, ili ili, uli uli, they know some animal dances, hula noho, hula kuhi lima, various type and styles of dancing. They would need to know that before they uniki from that section then concentrated effort would occur in the chanting section. Not only mele hula and that is important as well as in the ho'opa'a that goes into mele hula, including pahu, but also oli.. To develop their chanting style, their vocal techniques ect.. and then after that would be uniki as a kumu hula and that would be the more formal process. Because by that time they should be able to know all the things that it needs to be a kumu hula and be able to know if they want to take that commitment. (HULA HAD CHANGED?) Yes! I don't necessarily see that as ben bad. Hula again is a creative art, therefore there are always development occur in any kind of creativity, so I don't necessarily see the

changes as been bad, but I do still feel there are certain traditional foundations that we must not leave behind. We must not forget that we must bring along with us and share with our students and share with the general public as we there for also express each of of our all kinds of creativity so yes I have seen hula changed. I have seen it incorporate being more explict, then leaving more of the imagination to the viewer.. I think that develops because so few understand the language for me the language is very important. Because for me hula is the visual representation of the word and the words has the importance the words has the auana and not only general populace no longer understands the words but also the kumu hula who does not speak the language does not have the cultural understanding in references to the words that are within this mele there the motion or the presentation becomes more explict so I have seen that change occur. I recall being in a class with Pat Bacon, Namaka Bacon, she had mentioned to us once that if most of the halau had to learn the hula like they had they will be bore to death, becuase the motions were not explict they were in comparison of to days very simplist. However, the strength in it came from the understanding of the dancer and that was portrayed in the dance not only the specific hand and body movements. So I see the explictiveness occuring. I see the incorporation of other styles of dancing. Perhaps so more western style if you want to call it that into the hula and even into kahiko. I guess I remember hula as I was growing up as been very refine as been clean and clear to watch and I see that Some hula is becoming a play, I guess it is the word to use when there are a lot of extemporaneous materials when kumu hula will use to express the dance that the dance will become like a play. It shows exactly what it says in the words rather than a hint of what is being said. (WHAT KIND OF ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO THE NEW KUMU HULA?) Well, you need to look carefully at your intent. Why do you want to do this. If you want it for the glory of being a kumu hula, that everybody knows you and you get to go all over and do all kinds of things, maybe that's not the right reason and you need to

look at you intent when you feel your intent is one for the art of hula, for the furtherance of the hawaiian culture beliefs system and practices then what you need to know is that it demands a great deal of your time and your energy and your effort and it is not a part time thing you know when you are a kumu hula. Your hula is with you 24 hours a day. You cannot shut it off, even when you are at work or riding around in your car. Things will pop into your head that you may want to research, you may want to try in a hula that you may want to reinforce in your classes or what ever. So hula will be with you 24 hours a day. It is not something that you can shut off, so it demands a great deal from you. you need to be ready for your students to view you not as only their teacher, but their counselor, their friend, their disciplinarian perhaps sometimes, like a family member, maybe like a mother or a father figure. Many of my students share things with me that they don't share with their parents, so you need to be ready to be an emotional support to your students as well and to know that the bottom line is the buck stops with you. You must take all responsibility for anything that happen in your halau, you cannot slap it off and say Oh! that was the student's fault. It is always your fault, it is always the kumu hula's responsibility of anything that happens within the halau. (YOUR DEFINITION OF HULA KAHIKO?) Well, for me hula kahiko is a styling of hula, utilizing chant rather than singing and .. the traditional percussion instruments rather than contemporary instruments for accompaniment and basically drawing more upon those basic foundations of hula steps and presentation. It is more earthy. Is the word or is more connected to the earth, and its expressions come from the movements of nature and you need to observe that so that kahiko is a presentation . In which for me, the purity of the movement is what is important simplicity is not the word, is more a purity of the movement and a styling that has come through the generations, the stylings again comes differently because of the different traditions you might come from. But it is a less flowery perhaps is the word as well, type of movement. (ABOUT

LANGUAGE?) I teach somewhat, I say somewhat because again a 1/3 of my students already speak hawaiian, so when I teach in hawaiian sometimes as well and those others 2/3, that do not understand hawaiian gets the gits of it by what it is happening so I teach in Hawaiian as well. Because I also teach hawaiian at Maui Community College, I usually tell my dancers if you want to learn language as a language their are places for you to go. There are colleges, there's adult education, or their are many other ways to learn it plus I just don't have the time to just have a separate class just for language. (IS IT IMPORTANT?) Definately.. as they learn hula they need also to learn the language, now in halau I also utilize the language because of the mele. Becuase of the chants and they get the words and the translation and we will go through what the words means in the litteral sense as well as perhaps historically, culturally, ect.. to deepen their understanding of that particular hula, but I do not teach hawaiian language in my hula classes not at this point, I may later on.. (WHAT OTHER THINGS DO YOU DO?) I am the director of "punana na leo o Maui" the hawaiian language preschool. I am also actively involved in Maui historical socitey the Maui community and Arts Culture Center. I am also actively involoved in the protect Koho'olawe Ohana, the Maui Kupuna la'au lapaau, so trying to bring a greater understanding of hawaiian culture through arts, through history and through other cultural groups. I find that, see my emphasis has changed as of 1 year ago, befor a year ago, I thought that what was important was to help people who do not understand about hawaiian language and hawaiian culture, help them to understand us but I change, so I use to teach what I know as "vitech" on Maui who is the vistor industry training and educating center. I used to teach community classes there in hawaiian culture and language ect.. and then I used to go and do employee training in hawaiian culture in the different hotels and would occasionally do lectures series at the different hotels, well I change my focus about 1 year ago I guess it is by now and becuase in working in "punana na leo" I found our own people don't know about thier language

and their culture. So my focus changed from outside hawaiian community to inside the hawaiian community and my focus is now to help hawaiians to understand how they can make or utilize hawaiian cultural beliefs, practices in their everyday life and I found the parents of the children that come to Punana na leo want their children to learn hawaiian cultural practices, but they don't know how, they don't know how to teach them, so by doing what we call "La 'ohana" or family days we go down to the beach with the children and the families, we have someone teaching them how to throw net, looking at limu. What kind of limu is good to eat, what is not good to eat, go get "papa'i" or crabs or the shoreline things what is good to eat, how do you prepare it, what is not good to eat so this is for our own people for most hawaiians it was not taught to them.. our seniors, mid 60's and up that was their life they did all these things I am looking at my own family as an example, but the generations to follow either were not interested or our Hawaii changed and so when our kupuna used to go and get limu there is no limu there anymore. When they used to go up into the mountains to get certain types of teas or medicines, that's not available to them anymore. So they don't pass that on to their children or grandchildren, because they don't know where to go for much of this anymore. They have been confined now to areas outside their regular gathering places maybe.. so by the time it gets to the families of like what I see of our Punana na Leo children that range from age mid 20's to mid 30's they don't know, we lived in different islands. My mother lived in Oahu, I live in Maui, my children see my mother occasionally, but they don't live with her. She cannot share those things that are special to her with them so that when they grow into adulthood they can therefore share with their children so there is that break that we had splintered from a very close family to geographically to now a family that is very separate many of our kupuna work they still work at age 65. They no longer take care of their grandchildren so there is that break in the hawaiian method of teaching by living and observing so now we have to. We have to revamp how we are

going to teach this kind of information to our families and sometimes it has to be in a classroom or in a structural kind of method rather than as they grow up.. (HULA IN THE FUTURE?) What I have seen over the past few years is we go through a penjilum of movement. We go real contemporary; you know people are doing lots of comtemporany inovative things and then it goes back to a very strong traditional styling, this it goes a little more contemporary so we are kind of doing this penjilum kind of development in hula as I've seen it so I think it will continue to do the same that we will have our kahiko and I hope that those who focus on a traditional styling will continue to do so we always have that as our foundation but also we are creative people today and our focuses to day will be someone else's kahiko eventually so I think it will always and it will always grow and like I said I don't necesssarily see that as being bad. But I do hope that we will always remember the traditional styling the traditional methods, the kahiko, the words and the chants. (HULA MATER FOR YOU?) I have to think because when I was learning growing up, I feel I had lots of contact with what I consider hula masters.. TAPE ENDS..).

NOTES: A hula master Aunto Io, Henry Pa, Aunty Sally, Kau'i Zuttermeister, they have to pay their dues; being in hula long time. Great deal of cultural understanding have a particular style a way of dancing particular to them....