

George Naope

This was all in Hilo. It was then that I went to Joe Ilalaole who I consider a master teacher and I stayed with Him until he left for Honolulu. He taught ih Kula. Then he moved to Honolulu and became a policeman. Mary Fujii taught me only Kahiko no auwana. She was a christian so she talked about the kapus but there were none kept during my training. There were no kuahus used it was just the regular thing with prayers before you danced and after you were pau. It was all christain. She taught the old dances and how to oli. She was well known for her sitting dances. You don't see tooo much of that today. Everyone wants to get up and move around. She did a lot of sitting and a lot of chanting. She had her own style of chanting. Most of it was oli, some of it was ohaehae depending on the number but most of it was oli. I went to Ilalaole when I was ten years old so I stayed with mama Fujii for about 5 years. I was fornced into the hula so the more i was taught the more I didn't like it. It wasn't until i got older that I considered her a great teacher. She had ad deepdown root feeling for the hula. She spoke the language fulently. I would sit down and watch her and admire her neverthinking that the hula was going to be my livelihood.

I stayed with Ilalaole for 7-8 years, until I just about finished high school. I worked with him mostly on the kapu dances. Everything was done like the olden days with him. You had to have a password to enter the halau. You had to oli and then he if it was corredct he would answer and let oyoun in.

After he went to Honolulu I went Ato Aunite Anna Hall. who lived in the Olaa where Uncle Henry Pa took lessons from . I also took chanting from her.

Then I learned form Auntie Jennie Wwilson. I learnd more auwana from jennie wilson. I learned hand movements from her. Everyboedy's hand movements in auwana was flying all over the place, Auntie Jennie had a very sedate way of moving the hands. The hands told the story so there had to be a very definite movement to the hand. You cannot make everything kuikau.

Because o fmy great grandmother who was very infuential in my taking the haula and all these people who would come to our house. Auntie Mary kawena pukui would come to our house all the time to talk with my grandmother.

Auntie Anna Hall, Mahilani Webb, I got to know all of these people because of my grandmother. It was made easy for me to go to the masters.where other people weere having a hard time because the masters would only handpick who they wanted. When I graduated from schol I tarvle travelled with Ray Kinney and worked at the Niimalu Hotē. I started off with Ray Kinney as a chanter and eneded up doing comedian work. Any way it ~~manyadmanama~~ payed money and i began to see that you could make a living on the hula. I opened my first commercial studio in the 7th grrade. I payed my way through school because i came from a poor family. The studio opened in Hilo in a barber shop.

This japanese lady was retiring from the barber shop business so they took out the chairs and let me use the shop to teach. Her name was Mrs. Tsubaki and she took the barbershop chairs out and let me use the shop to teach.

I charged 50 cents a week which was a lot of money back then, Wti Wtih With fifty cents I could go to the movies, I could go to the drug store drink ~~sodam~~ soda and when I needed money for school I had it.

To me teaching at Kalihi-palama was the biggest part of my whole life. I Appreciated teaching hula. Iwas able to do waht I always wanted to do. which was to teach the Hawaiian. All of the people at Kamehameha-Kaahumanu Housing were not only Hawaiian but theywere difficult Hawaiians. That was the utmost in my teaching. I went there planning to stay for a w few months and I stayed their dr for over a year. When I left I felt bad because we all worked so hard. We had all kind of kids come out of there. I had people coming to class half-stoned. What was good about using the hula was that they had respect for the hula and for me. They progressed from a point where some of them came in stoned and others felt it was sissy to apoint where they had respect for the hula dn for me. Mary Fujii never mentionened her kumu. Ilalaole came from Anna Hall. Anna Hall never mentionned who her kumu were. It wasn't the practice to do that back then. ~~The~~ Hawaiian teachers of that time, you didn't ask questions. They said we are going to do this today and you don't say why or what. After I left here nad went to Honolulu to entertain I got to learn from Lokalia, Iolani, and Katie Nakaula. I consider Aunite Llokalia a great teacher because she was a highly educated woman. Because of her background of education Lokalia would take time and explain before she taught. She would take the time to teach. What hand positions ofr the dance, how your diaphragm should work for the oli. Aunty Lokalia was a great musician so timing was bery important to her. She was a strickt teacher but you wanted to listen to everything you didn't want to miss anything that this lady said. ~~Aunty was an hawa~~ Aunty Io was Hawaii's greatest exponent of the hula, she was Hawaii's greatest dancer. Aunty was a dancer not a teacher. Iolani was a artist and artists are not great teachers. I used totell people when you go to Iolani you should feel so fortunate.



If you sit down and just watch her face and her eyes, watch the way she cocks her head, watch the way she moves her fingers, Auntie Io might dance one dance three da times and you'd never recognize it. She dances with warm feelings, eyes, hands. When you go to Iolani you might not learn the dance the way you want to learn but to there is so much to learn just by watching the expression on her face. These things are learning in itself. In the old days everyone was afraid of knowledge being stolen so the old masters would die without sharing their knowledge. The different racial people who live here are the future of Hawaii. I teach haole, Japanese, pake and i used to get scolding because i share this knowledge with everybody. But I teach everyone to the best of my ability. I feel like I would be doing wrong if I was only teaching them halfway. You have to teach them everything, the language, the pronunciation of the words, you have to teach them the kahiko, the pa'i, the oli. You cannot just come and learn hula. and don't learn the chant or the story and background behind the chant. You have to know the story and the background, you have to know the dance, you have to know how to pai the ipu and the pahu. Unless you know all this you won't understand the hula. You cannot come one week and learn only the dance and then the next week learn a different one. That is not hula. My students must learn the dance, they must learn the pa'i to the dance, they must learn the oli. They can be haole or Japanese or anything but i know definitely when they get out there they are going to do Hawaiian. If you teach them halfway that's the kind of hula you are going to see, incomplete hula. They are going to say to themselves this is the way i was taught and nobody in the world is going to change them no matter what race they may be. I want to share and every halau in Hawaii knows this. Anything they like come ask me because if we don't share these dances are going to die. I feel i was so fortunate because these people shared with me dances that they never shared with nobody. I feel i should share what they shared because after i go who's going to do it. I want to share, I'm an old man already I just had another birthday. I've been teaching 34 years.

~~In the past the kahiko was the most important thing and that is why it is there~~  
A few years back the kahiko was dying. Take Hilo for example. ~~In the past~~ I was trained mainly in kahiko so when i went out with my ipu that's all i knew how to teach. But in the last ten years it has come back and now everybody is kahiko-minded. The thing that has really done this is the Merry Monarch which has really kept the hula intact. When I started that it was my intent to just revive the hula kahiko. I hate the word Competition and I can never find to this day a word to say what i really mean because it isn't really meant to be a competition. I picked Kalakaua because he revived the hula. He brought back 300-500 of the old mele.. Then suddenly someone suggested we give prizes as well. and it started to become a competition. But if it's doing the job that we started out to do then that's enough. I always tell people that the winners doesn't mean that they are the best in the state of Hawaii. because the general public has their own idea who's good and who's not. The seven judges come from seven different halaus and everyone has their personal ~~flavor~~ set of values. The basic steps are the same but they differ on how one presents them. I feel that traditional hula is the hula passed down from the kumus that I learned from. and I have not changed what I have learned. I feel that the pahu are traditional. I have not changed my style of dancing and teaching methods which i learned from my kumu. Even when I teach auwana my feet and hand movements are done with traditional motions. Today's kind of thinking is to make motions very fancy and free wheeling. That's why some halaus who should win at the Merry Monarch lose because the judges who have been in the business know the difference between the traditional and modern kahiko. The modern creativity is beautiful but does it belong in traditional hula? To me it belongs in hula auwana.

~~When making a judgment~~

To me the young kumu go on doing what they do because nobody has the nerve to tell them to stop. It all comes back to training. A lot of teachers learn a basic hula like Kawika, or Heeia and think they are doing kahiko. Kahiko is so much more and there are very few teachers in Hawaii who will share the real kahiko with a student. There is only one master ~~that is willing to share his knowledge~~ left in Hawaii that is willing to share and that is Kauai Zuttermeister. What is missing in the hula community is agreement over what is a kumu hula and what is a hula teacher. We have many great hula teachers but we have very few kumu hula.

I consider Kalakaua modern days already so in my halau I don't teach Kawika, Heeia or Liliue. I don't do songs like Pua Hone, I Kona songs in auwana. I try to stick to things nobody else does.

I think the kumu of today should take hula. They should find a master and learn. Go to the source because all the books of Hawaii in the past and today were written by haole. If you haven't had a real basic hula training you cannot understand Emerson's book and you end up creating from the book using it as a starting off point