



0. Ancient Hawaiian History And Culture - Story Preface

1. The Ancient Hawaiians' Sustainable ways

2. Ancient Hawaiian History And Culture

3. Ancient Hawaiian Surfing

4. Ancient Hawaiian Fishing

5. Ancient Hawaiian Fishing

6. Ancient Hawaiian Kapu

7. Kapu: The Sacred Rules

8. CITY OF REFUGE

9. Captain Cook Arrives in Hawaii

10. Captain Cook

11. Captain Cook's Death

12. Iolani Palace

13. The Overthrow Of Hawaii

14. Hawaiian Overthrow

15. Attack of Pearl Harbor

Kamehameha was one of the first Hawaiian kings at the time. Professional Hawaiian dancers would have to dance their best hula to the ruler if he demanded entertainment. If there were one slight, very tiny mistake the island ruler got his eyes on, the dancer would have to get brutally executed. Thankfully, later in Hawaiian history there were rulers that did not do this kind of rule for the island. Hula was very crucial back in ancient Hawaiian times and was a great skill; it was used for entertainment, to challenge other people, or just to appreciate yourself for doing it and showing your skills to other people. In today's time, hula is not obligatory, but is still a great skill and has lots of interesting history and background behind it. Hula has beautiful costumes, an ancient old culture with a history of important events, unique dances, and fine, beautiful instruments you can't find in stores today. To summarize, hula was very important, as a dance and to Hawaii's history and culture.

Dancers wear costumes not just to look pretty, color patterns and styles give information to the educated observer of the dance. Dances for the most part represented the god Kane, by using patterns that imitate water as well as ornaments of shells. Both genders equally can wear pa'u (skirts) made of kapa (bark cloth). Male dancers often only wear malo (Loincloth). Both genders wear lei on their neck, head, and sometimes hats. Women performed most dances. Kupe'e go on wrists and ankles, which draws the attention to their hands and feet, and their delicate movement, while in the dance. Before 1820 women wore shorter skirts and men simply wore loincloth. This changed because the missionaries by law made them wear less revealing skirts. In conclusion, the costumes were a big part to show how the dance flowed with the movements and were very pretty.

Hula is a traditional art of movement and has a smooth flow. Furthermore, the movement tells a story and represents and describes movement of nature like trees blowing in the wind and fish swimming in a river. Laka, the Hawaiian god, made two groups of Hawaiian dance: Olapa means dancing with energy. Ho'ol-pa is dancing with less energy, but with musical instruments, both were equally important. In essence, hula movements copy nature to make the dance more unique and more comparable to the other historical dances that include such details.

The Hawaiian instruments were also very important for making entertainment in the long run. Following is a list of the major instruments.

- First is the Uli'Uli (Gourd rattle). Gourds stuffed with shells, seeds, or pebbles. It has a handle usually covered in colorful bird feathers. People dancing with this instrument will also occasionally add tapa to the gourd.
- Ka'la ou' (Stick instrument), Ili'Ili (Small stones). Dancers will hold two of these in each hand and clank them together, mix this beat with other instruments and you will make a true Hawaiian song.

- Hano (Nose Flute). Flutes made with bamboo. Blowing air into the instrument by the nose plays it. It is often used in love stories.
- Hokeo Kani (Wind instrument)
- Hokiokio (Gourd Whistle)
- Ili'Ili (small black stones)
- Ipu (Drum)
- Ipu Heke (Gourd Drum)
- Ipu Hoehoe (Gourd whistle #2)
- Pui (Large triton shell)
- Pu La I (Ti Leaf Whistle).

You will not be able to find some of these instruments in stores, but you can make them! Example: To make the Ili Ili, take two small stones and clank them together. Yeah, that's pretty simple.

Pele was the fire god of Hawaii and many people worshiped her with their fire-themed dances as I mentioned when I told that, people can imitate water or wind in dance. Ancient mo'oelo are filled with stories of Hula. The first hula started as a myth, when Pele begged her sisters to dance and sing for her. Only Hi'laka stepped forward to perform. She used movements she'd practiced with her good friend Hoepoe. Kapo and Laka join her as the spiritual patrons of Hula. Kapo could be caring or vengeful, Laka is more associated with hula and was symbolized in the halau (hula school). This turned into a major part of celebrations during makahiki, the harvest festival. People also traditionally walk up the mountain before performing to the mountain trails where they go to the rainforest. People who danced back in the day were dancing for their chief, Hawaiian god, or just to entertain and practice and show off your skills.

In 1920s and 30s the image of Hawaii was a tourist playground where it made millions in the industry. It was marketed and made a boom in the tourist industry. Hawaii has two major hula dancing competitions; one is the King Kamehameha Hula competition, usually held in June. The other competition is the Aloha Hula competition held in April. So, hula is very important to Hawaiian society because it lightened up Hawaii by bringing fun, skillful, and entertaining dances that still lives today. It was used to impress superiors and entertain other people in the community. Today, it is used for many other reasons that add a twist to our daily lives.

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