

Hula. When you think of hula you may think of all the soft and gentle hand movements and grass skirts. But it wasn't always like this. Hula dancing is a Hawaiian dance. It's a dance that Hawaiians use to tell stories, history and more. The dance has changed throughout the years. My main inquiry question is, "*What factors have had the most impact on the evolution of Hawaiian hula?*" After researching I have found three main ways that led to the hula changing. One way is because of the American missionaries, another way is because of tourism, and the last way is because of the blending of different styles of hula from Native Hawaii and foreign countries.

One factor that had an impact on the evolution of hula were the American missionaries. It was on March 30, 1820 when the missionaries came to Hawaii. They had been traveling for 164 days on a boat. When the missionaries saw the hula, they thought it was a waste of time. As Hiram Bingham said, "They were wasting their time in learning, practicing, or witnessing hula, or heathen song and dance." The missionaries couldn't ban or abolish hula because they were just visitors. So they started converting many Hawaiians to the Christian Faith. The missionaries got rid of many Hawaiian traditions, introduced the English language, and they introduced their Western culture. The Queen, Regent Ka'ahumanu, also became a Christian. This resulted in Queen Regent Ka'ahumanu, the ruler of Hawaii, banning hula in the year 1830. Although hula was banned, it was still done secretly. After 44 years, hula was brought back! In 1874, a new ruler named King David Kalākaua', unbanned hula. He thought that it was wrong to ban hula because "The missionaries did not understand the spiritual meaning behind the hula. They could not make an informed decision." Although the

hula was revived, some of the chants and songs were forgotten, changing the hula from the original songs and dances.

Another factor that had an impact on the evolution of hula was tourism. It was in the early and mid 1900s when tourists started coming to Hawaii. They were looking for what the “Island life” was like, and what the Hawaiian’s lifestyle was like. But then they discovered the hula, and they transformed it into something totally different. The hula performances were done differently to keep the tourists interested. The local Hawaiian people were unhappy because they felt that the newly done performances were only for the tourist’s entertainment. By the 1950s the hula was almost completely changed into tourist art. The purpose of the original hula was to preserve their history and stories. According to Shayna Noelani Dabis, a hula kumu, or teacher, “Hawaiians didn’t have a writing system so we recorded it through chants, through dances and we passed that on so that knowledge would not be lost.” The hula lost it’s meaning as it became a tourist attraction.

The final factor that had an impact on the evolution of hula was because of the blending of different styles of hula from Native Hawaii and foreign countries. In 1865 there was a new style of hula. It was called hula ku'i (Joined hula). This was when different styles and dances were added to the original hula. Mixing different elements to hula started becoming popular. When steamship travel became frequent, people from all over the world came to Hawaii. Lots of people introduced their own music. For example, Henry Berger, a European musician, introduced melodies, dances, and instruments from his country. The Hawaiian dance started getting many new features. Hula ku'i is different from traditional hula because the

newly established hula usually had Western musical instruments like the guitar, ukulele, and bass. One mix of two styles is Hawaiian music. It is a style of Reggae music. Reggae music is a type of music that comes from Jamaica in the late 1960s. King Kalakua also let Japanese immigrants come into Hawaii in the year 1885. On February 8, 1885 there were about 900 Japanese immigrants. The Japanese were also involved in the hula ku'i changes. Many people came to Hawaii and added their own music, instruments, and melodies into the hula from all around the world. The other cultures changed hula by adding different ideas and traditions from their home into the hula.

In conclusion, there were three major factors that had an impact on the evolution of hula: The American missionaries, tourism, and the blending of different styles of hula from Native Hawaii and foreign countries. Even though hula has changed a lot in the past years, it still carries the heritage of the Hawaiians.