

Uniki

This feast belonged to the hula schools. The first feast was the initiation feast and no outsider was admitted, only the pupils and the master (kumu). Pork was the usual article of food with poi. Awa was used then and daily until after the graduation. In case a pig was unobtainable or was a kapu article of food to one or more of the pupils, "sea pigs" were substituted. The "sea pig" were not pigs at all but fish that were accepted as substitute for the four legged animal, such as the mullet or the kumu fish. The bones were carefully gathered up after eating and deposited in a deep pool or the sea where they would be undefiled.

A strict diet was adhered to during the training. No bananas, sugar cane, lipeepee sea weed, taro tops or squid was allowed. No pupil was allowed to share food with outsiders. For instance, if a big ulua was caught, half or a third could not be sent to a hula school. Small fish that could be entirely eaten by the pupil was best liked. A portion of fish or meat was called haki'na, a word which also means a breaking off. The lipeepee sea weed has the word "pee" or hiding away in its name and suggests a hiding away of knowledge. Hee (squid) also means a fleeing or defeat and suggests a defeat of purpose and so anything of that nature was avoided. I have also been asked as to the taro tops, bananas, and sugar cane.

The taro top has an itch in it and was avoided. To dream of the exposure of the sexual organs was a sign of bitter disappointment. If any of my grand folks had a dream like that, they would not go fishing or on any business trip whatever. The banana suggested the male sexual organ and therefore to be avoided. The word for sugar cane was ko, a word that also meant a fulfillment. Not a fulfillment of ones desires, but rather a fulfillment or a yielding to undesirable temptations. (The sugar cane was carefully explained to us by Keahi Luahine, one of my instructors).

After several months of training, the class was ready for the uniki or graduation. Another private feast was held on the night when the altar was dis-

mantled. The residue of the feast and the greens of the altar were deposited in the sea or in the heiau dedicated to the hula if there was one near by.

This feast was also a strictly private one. Pork was usually eaten at this feast but if that was unobtainable, the "sea pig" was again substituted.

The next day or evening, the hula group made their first public appearance. A large feast was given by the relatives of the graduating pupil and everybody was welcome to come. The people enjoyed themselves at this feast. The spectators, if they chose, laid their gifts in the dancing area. This was divided among all the dancers and musicians. A gift given privately to a dancer belonged to her. This was not divided with the others.

The uniki feast of old was an event that was looked forward to with joy.

Feasts of this name are still held when pupils completed a hula course. Due to the high price of pork and advertising and commercialism in general, tickets are sold from a dollar to three dollars each. Much is said of an uniki today, if after paying expenses, the giver of the feast did not "make money", he is laughed at by those of other hula schools.

Page 11 "Uniki" from *Feasts (As I knew them in Kau and Puna)*

by Mary P. Wiggin

HEN I: 998-1010 (page 1008)

Bishop Museum Archives

No Reproduction Without Prior Written Permission