

## The Spirit of Aloha by Kawika Sands

In the beginning A (pronounced "ahh"), the eternal light giver, created Namaka O Ka Hai (the great power of the sea). But A saw the seas were alone, so he freed the force Pele. Pele created the lands. To keep them above her jealous sister, she constantly renewed them. The people who found these lands named it Hawai'i hailing it as a place of blessed "alo" or "aloha" meaning "in the presence of A". Life in old Hawai'i was a spiritual experience. There was aloha everywhere; in the people, plants, animals, rocks and reefs. Even in the canoes and paddles and the tools used to make them.

Aloha means mutual regard and affection and extends warmth in caring with no obligation in return. It is the essence of relationships in which each person is important to every other person for collective existence. It's to hear what is not said, to see what cannot be seen and to know the unknowable.

It is this concept more than any other that distinguishes the Hawaiian culture. It also allows an outrigger canoe club and its members to grow and thrive. A club's leaders, more than any other, should understand, and be possessed of this concept. It is not enough to be in charge, one must lead by example. Aunty Pilahi Paki described in this unuhi laula loa (free translation):

### The Meaning of ALOHA

Akakai : kindness, expressed with a feeling of tenderness,

Lokahi : unity, expressed with a feeling of harmony,

'Olu'olu : agreeable, expressed with a feeling of pleasantness,

Ha'aha'a : humility, expressed with a feeling of modesty,

Ahonui : patience, expressed with a feeling of perseverance.

These are the traits that express the charm, the warmth, the sincerity, the generosity and the love of an intangible substance or spirit known to many in Hawai'i nei as "aloha".

Aloha no, a hui hou!