



TODAY'S HAWAIIAN WORD IS:

Hoa

Companion, friend, associate, colleague, comrade, partner, mate, peer, fellow.

It's no secret that my first career was in education, as a teacher and administrator, from preschool through high school. One of the best pieces of advice I learned as an educator came from Dr. Michael Thompson, a renowned psychologist specializing in children and parenting. He said, as teachers and parents, we should pay attention to each child to make sure they had at least one friend. Friendships help children develop emotionally and morally. Through friendships they learn important social and life skills. When you think about it, the same holds true for adults. My friends continue to teach me and help me be a better person. I treasure the friends in my life, both in my professional and personal life. **Hoa** is the general term for a friend or partner.

In the Hawaiian language, we have something that is often compared to the feminine and masculine use of words in French or Spanish but it is not the same. We have two "classes" of possession known as A and O class (ko'u vs. ka'u as an example, two words that mean my). It is all about the relationship between the possessor and the item being possessed. Generally speaking, A-class words = control. O-class words = no control. We have no control over who our parents are or grandparents are so we would say "ko'u kupuna" for "my grandparent". For "my husband", I would say "ka'u kāne". I have control over who I choose to be my husband. I also choose to have children – ka'u mau keiki = my children. **Hoa** are O-class. Ko'u **hoa**. My friend. It is as if we don't control who our friends are or perhaps we don't control our friends. The way we view hoa may not make sense to us in today's modern world, but this O-class hoa classification causes me to pause and think of friendship with a different mindset, that's for sure.

Other O-class words include our body parts and things produced by our body (sweat, saliva, etc.).

There are many different times of **hoa**. Here are just a few:

Hoa aloha – beloved or good friend

Hoapili – even closer friend (pili means attached or close to)

Hoa hana – colleague, fellow worker (hana means work)

Hoa hele – traveling companion (hele means to go or travel)

Hoa hānau – cousin (birth friend)

Here is an easy phrase to use:

'O (state the name) ko'u **hoa**. Name is my friend.

'O 'oe ko'u **hoa**. You are my friend.

Be healthy, my friends. E ola!

Liana Honda

Native Hawaiian Health

7 'Aukake 2023