Magic

There are two very distinct sorts of magic in the Gilberts - to Kawai and to Tabunea. In Kawai is purely ritual, being unaccompanied by incantations or spoken spells of any kind. An example is the simple burning of a fire in a circle surrounded by a square in the preparations of a poet to compose his song.

In Tabunea is the incantation or spell. It is generally joined in combination with ritual, in which case the ritual is called to Kawai and the spoken charm to Tabunea. Both ritual and words are equally important to success in such an event, the one being considered powerless for good or evil without the other. In a few cases pure Tabunea is found - simply shells without ritual - an exclamation being the exhortation to some throng made by the poet before his song is first raised in the manacles.
Magic and Prayer.

Hitherto, I have used the word magic as a convenient label to attach to all the magico-religious formulae and rites described in the first part of my work. But it is obvious that there is a vast difference between such examples of magic as the wau or possession, and the appeal to the moon or paganism, between the taboo of a coconut-tree on paganism, and the address to an ancestor on paganism. Before a further discussion of the subject is possible, it is necessary to find and to define a set of terms expressing the nature of such a difference. I intend henceforward to limit the use of the word magic to such actions, whether of word or gesture, as are so secret in character that

no benefit is definitely limited to the individual performing them; which depend for their efficacy upon what the native calls to maneuver and to kawai — the precise word of power or the exact ritual used; and which claim to control or command the obedience of the spiritual being addressed, and therefore lack any element of appeal.

I shall use the term prayer to designate that class of actions which, while being addressed towards a spiritual power, is open in character at least to the extent that an individual may perform the ceremonial for the benefit of other spectators beside himself; which is not dependant for its success upon a stereotyped form of words or gestures; and which is characterized by the element of appeal, or propitiation of a superior being.
Between magic and prayer thus defined is to be found in the Gilbertes a third form of magico-religious ceremonial, invariably (so far as I understand) connected with the cult of the sun, which seems to partake of the elements of both. For while, in some cases, it seems to be secret in the essential sense that its benefit is limited to the performer, it is at other times of an open and even public character; and while, like magic, it is stereotyped in its formulae, it has the nature of prayer in that it is addressed as an appeal or supplication to a power held in awe and fear. If my definitions of magic and prayer are sound, then we have here a type of ritual which is neither the one nor the other, but a hybrid of both. I shall reserve a consideration of this form until I deal with the question of the sun cult.

A very definite distinction exists in the native mind between magic and prayer. Magic is called generically by the name tabua, while prayer is called tatare. I do not wish to imply that the Gilbertese nature has reached the stage of defining the precise nature of his mental attitudes towards the spiritual powers which he recognises. But if you give him concrete examples of tabua and tatare he is entirely incapable of confounding the one with the other, of calling by the name tabua that which is tatare, or vice versa. And it is certainly indicative of a pretty clear realisation of values when an old...
woman of seventy odd, on being asked outright what was the difference between a 
tatāro and a tabunuma in her view, answered immediately and in a tone of exclamation, 
as if the question were absurd, "Kai, a KaoKoro, a KaoKoro! Te 'uburo te tatāro, 
as te tabunuma boa tāki te 'uburo!" Angkasa 
(Why they are different, they are different! The 
tatāro is a beggin, and the tabunuma is 
certainly not a beggin! Forsooth!) This 
answer is striking particularly because it 
points right to the heart of the psychological 
difference between the two things. My old woman 
might have been expected, if she saw any 
distinction at all, to have given salience 
to the material rather than the psychological 
feature. She might have answered, for 
example, that in a tatāro you give propit-
atory offerings to the power addressed, 
while in a tabunuma you do not. This 
she certainly knew, because she referred 
to it in the course of the conversation 
which followed; but the psychological difference, 
which lies between propitiatory offering as a sacrifice 
and material manifestation, was certainly 
that materialism was not in evidence but there 
can be no doubt from the vigour of his 
first answer that it was the difference 
of mental attitude above all which 
struck her as the salient difference, 
distinguishing the tatāro from the tabunuma.
those who will, arise from the assembly, so to a sandspit a little distance apart, and doff all their clothes. Immediately their garments fall from them they are converted into purpose.

All set out together for the village of Ruma, the “caller” leading them with dancing movements. When they are well on their way, the “caller” leaves them and begins to back to his sleeping body. His eyes open, he awakens Pono, sleep, and says to the people who await him: “I face a tako raonic nakani Katuna Norman.”

The whole village, both members and non-members of the tribe, then goes and decked itself out with mats and garlands and scented oils, exactly as if a dance were toward. The whole company then up the to the beach. While awaiting the purpose, it is sternly forbidden to talk or even to think of food. The purpose must be referred to as “our friends,” their visit is attended to as a gathering to the “dance.” If there is any mention of a killing, the purpose will hear, and turnaway in fear.

The animals given straight to the
beach. The "caller, standing knee deep in the shallow water to welcome them. He goes through the gestures of the dance, and repeats the incantation of the Bincknay, and entreats his "brothers" to come and "dance" ashore.

When the fish are close in, the whole population descends into the sea. Each one chooses as porpoise and standing beside it, fondles and embraces it, and leads it ashore.

Whatever may be the truth of the caller's descent into the sea, there is absolutely not the shadow of a doubt that if you ask one of these men to call the porpoise, the porpoise can be made to arrive at that very day. Also it is borne out by hundreds of witnesses that, whatever may be the cause of their arrival, they swim into the shallow water in such a condition that a man may go down and clasp them in his arms without difficulty.

The magic connected with the Bincknay, as that concerning navigation, may be inherited by women, as well as men. Kitima is the only man of his tribe who has inherited the spells; the rest of the people in this tribe who hold the
Sun and Moon.

The clan of Maerua was believed to have the power of causing eclipses of the Sun and moon at will. The ritual was as follows: The eclipse-maker built a small thatched hut on the eastern shore of the island, and hung mats about it in such a way as to exclude all light from the exterior. Towards moonrise or sunrise, as the case might be, he entered this hut and left outside a member of his clan to shout to him as soon as the edge of the luminary's disc appeared above the horizon. As soon as he received the signal, he began to mutter:

*I ti lwelelwele ia mata-n Taai (\Namakaina)\nI only enclore it in a fence face - of Sun

ibi-itera; I ti lwelelwele ia mata-n Taai
oneside; I only enclore it in a fence face - of Sun

na-itera; I ti lwelelwele ia mata-n Taai
twoside; I only enclore it in a fence face - of Sun

tri-itera;
three-side.

This simple formula was repeated twice. There was no other ritual. After the third repetition, the performer immediately lay down and slept. During his sleep the eclipse was alleged to take place. He would bring it to an end by awakening, and emerging from the hut into the open.

*(\Namakaina)
Noon.
Old men and women would go at moonset, on the first day of the young moon, to the Western beach, and address the moon in following manner:

Namakaina-ō! Namakaina-ō! Te-oiaki na mia
Nanakaina-ō! Ko na angana-ai ai oaki, te-oiaki na mia
Nanakaina-ō! Ko na angana ai an riaki, tei-oiaki na mia

While going down beach to edge of sea, where this is recited the old man opens his arms with palms up towards moon and does movements of the moon. When he begins chant he claps hands at each repetition of "moon" and does moon movements 3 times.
The succession to the Patai was, in the vast majority of cases, traced in the male line (i.e., through the father), but the Patai of the mother or father's mother was sometimes allotted to several children (generally the junior) of a numerous family. The mother's Patai was considered as a tabu in Kamawa, a place to make room of the father's Patai in a particular family group seemed to be in danger of overcrowding.

An adopted child would nearly always transfer to the Patai of his adopter. Supposing the adopter to be of the same uhu as himself, but on the mother's side, a child would thus leave the paternal Patai. Or again, if the adopter was of the paternal uhu, but had manually by adoption one other circumstance changed his lot at an earlier date, the adopted