

## THE CONCEPT OF MANA (A.R.T.)

### DEFINITIONS:

The term was taken from Melanesia and defined thus by Codrington:-

"It is a power or influence, not physical, and in a way supernatural; but it shows itself in physical force, or in any kind of power or excellence which a man possesses. This mana is not fixed in anything, and can be conveyed in almost anything; but spirits, whether disembodied souls or supernatural beings, have it and can impart it, and it essentially belongs to personal beings to originate it, though it may act through the medium of water, a stone or a bone." and again:-

"A force altogether distinct from physical power, which acts in all kinds of ways for good and evil, and which is of the greatest advantage to possess or control." Marret, the authority on the subject took the concept from Codrington, and used 'mana' as a worldwide scientific term, defining it:-

"cases of magico-religious efficacy where the efficacy has been automatic or derived - i.e., proceeding from the nature of a sacred person or thing, or put into a person or thing by a ghost or spirit."

In this way the term has been used beyond its original Melanesian meaning to include similar ideas - e.g., Orenda (Iroquois) 'mystic power derived from a chant'  
Wakan (Sioux) 'power that brings things to pass'  
Manitu (Algonquian) identical with these two  
Hasuia (Madagascar) 'efficacy'  
Baraka (Morocco) 'holiness'

### IMPORTANT POINTS TO NOTE: (A.R.T.)

1. It is supernatural - \*beyond the ordinary power of men  
\*outside the common processes of nature
2. It is impersonal - \*resembles a contagion or infection  
\*may have a material object as its vehicle  
\*belongs to a personal being to activate it  
\*but may be accidentally transmitted
3. It is a-moral - \*good or evil according to the intention of user  
\*good or evil according to rite used
4. It is the product of a ritual act  
\*operated by the correctly approved person  
\*performed in the correct ceremonial manner  
\*performed on correct occasion or emergency
5. Correctly used it is social (tribal)
  - a. Good - \*for the prosperity, preservation and growth of the tribe in peace and war  
\*for the maintenance of law and order and custom  
\*for control of weather and harvests
  - b. Evil - \*negatively, against the enemy or foreigner  
\*disciplinary - against the idiosyncratic in the tribe  
(View this as tribal, not individualist)
6. Used individually it represents a corruption  
- \*many forms of black magic - causing disease, killing by magic, wasting away magic, stealing the soul, etc.
7. It is quantitative - \*efficacy may depend on the degree or quantity or strength of mana procured  
\*mana used for good and evil compete
8. The concept of 'Mana' co-exists with the concept of 'tabu'  
\*Mana: Tabu, Electricity: Insulation  
\*Tabu protects the unwary  
\*Safeguards the holy place from desecration  
\*Safeguards the weakening of the mana