

# PSYCHOMENTAL COMPLEX OF THE TUNGUS

## INTRODUCTION

### CHAPTER I

#### DIFFICULTIES OF AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE PSYCHOMENTAL COMPLEX

##### 1. PSYCHOMENTAL COMPLEX

At present there may be no differences in opinions as to the nature of ethnographical phenomena in general, nor as to their complexes and elements. They are observable manifestations of acquired knowledge, practices, and behaviour. These are either transmitted from one generation to another, or borrowed from neighbours, or even created by the individuals who compose ethnical units, which, like any other *populatio*, possess a series of inherited physiopsychological complexes, the latter leaving possibilities for and putting limitations on creation of ethnographical phenomena. They are thus of a purely psychological and mental character, being a form of human adaptation as the latter is observed in the human units resulting from the process which I call *ethnos*. Ethnographical phenomena, in complexes and in elements, are functions and as such they cannot be understood in their static abstractions, so that description of an ethnographical complex, and consequently elements, forming the complex, presumes necessity of penetration into the *mechanism* of this function.

Since the ethnographical complexes cover a great number of cultural elements they must be classified in some way, for their description and even for their observation. The classification of the ethnographical elements and complexes into groups of material (or technical) culture, social organization, and "psychomental" complex is strictly technical; as I have already pointed out in my work dealing with the social organization of the Northern Tungus, the phenomena of material culture, social organization and psychomental complex form a certain system, a well balanced complex, in which all elements are more or less "adjusted" and thus they cannot be treated independently one from another. In this aspect of the problem we may consider complexes as *interacting* which expression cannot be taken literally for the cultural elements as such do not *act*, but the populations are acting. These remarks may suffice for showing my point of view, namely, in the treatment of the psychomental complex the grouping of ethnographical

elements into these three headings, is done only in view of the exposition of facts which must be classified in some way.

By the term "psychomental complex" I name here those cultural elements which consist of psychic and mental reactions on milieu. Milieu as a whole and in its elements is a changeable or stable, dynamic or static. For convenience of treatment these elements may be classified into two groups, namely, (1) a complex of reactions of a permanent and definite character, though they vary within a certain range, and (2) a complex of ideas which define certain mental attitudes and which may also be regarded as a theoretical system of the given unit (or even person). The psychomental complex of a unit as it is a function is also responsible for the functioning of the population unit as a whole. The functioning of this assures, or better, merely manifests existence of the unit. In fact, the psychomental complex as a function of adaptation to the *variable* milieus, makes the unit sensitive enough, both by rigid resistance and a flexibility, for production of reactions.

Indeed, the ethnographical facts gathered and presented here are phenomena of a special character. In the case of the material culture there are physical objects to be described, photographed, recorded, and analysed; in the case of the social organization there are relations which may be described as a fixed complex of practices; while in the case of psychic and mental elements, which form the psychomental complex, the description is confined to the attitudes and ideas, and only partly to the description of behaviour, customs and practices, which may be recorded and rarely photographed. So as material they greatly differ from other ethnographical groups. This is one of the additional reasons for treating them separately although I shall always refer to their connexion with the material culture and the social organization. The elements of the psychomental complex, as compared with those forming the complexes of material culture and social organization, are sometimes less stable; and at the same time — when taken separately — they are more numerous and of lesser importance. In