

*Indo-China and its Primitive People*

*Ex Libris*

C. K. OGDEN



*Photo by]*

*[L. de Layougnre.*

The Tomb of a Rade Chief decorated with Statues of his Faithful Women.

*[Frontispiece.*

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TO  
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A TOKEN OF REVERENCE AND AFFECTION

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## FOREWORD

No nation which desires worthily to fulfil the rôle of Protector to the barbarous races on whom it proposes to confer the benefits of civilization can afford to remain ignorant of their ways of life and thought. The interchange of ideas is as essential to successful colonization as the exchange of commodities. Unfortunately the path to knowledge is beset with difficulties. In the first place the savage or semi-savage is unable to apply the method of synthesis to those of his institutions which seem founded on custom. He cannot tell us which of his usages have been borrowed or imposed from outside. Further, as a rule, it seems impossible to find any medium of communication between his language and ours, so that any attempt at cross-examination is met by the sorry pretence that our questions "make his head ache."

During the period covered by the geodetical and topographical surveys which preceded the construction of the Trans-Indo-Chinese railway, the members of the mission to which I was attached lived for years among the natives upon terms of the greatest familiarity. We saw them in their homes, at their work and recreations, and we can at least claim that we obtained our knowledge at first hand.

I have not hesitated throughout this book to record the conclusions of my colleagues and to compare or contrast them with my own for the sake of the light they may throw upon each other.

I have analysed the rites and superstitions which came to my notice with a mind unhampered by obsession or prejudice. If I have seemed to dwell too fondly on analogous ceremonies among other peoples and in other days it is only because I wish to arrive at the broad principles which seem to me to underly all these phenomena, principles which are as immutable as human nature itself.