Peter the Great Museum of Anthropology and Ethnography (hereinafter - MAE) is the first Russian museum founded in 1714 by Peter the Great. Peter not only donated his personal collections on anatomy, zoology and botany as well as his collection of rarities and curiosities, but he also his residence (Summer Palace on Fontanka River) to the Museum. In 1719 the Museum was transferred to the so-called Kikiny Chambers and opened for public. Following the European tradition, it was named Kunstkamera. In 1727 the collections were opened for public in a new building constructed to accommodate the museum on the bank of the Neva River.

The Tlingit are one of the peoples of the north-west coast of North America. In 1741 this region was discovered by participants of the Second Kamchatka expedition of V.I. Bering and A.I. Chirikov. It was then that the Russians first encountered Indians - one of the ship's crew spotted a Tlingit boat in the distance. The next mention of the Tlingit in Russian sources dates to 1783 when several merchant ships sailed into Prince William Sound whose coast was inhabited by the Chugach people. It was from them that the Russians that their southern neighbors were the kolyuzhi people - this ethnic name was later used by the Russians to refer to the Tlingit people. The word *Koulischen* (or *kolosh*) means "alien" in the Chugach language.

The Russians first actually met the Tlingit people in 1788 when the trade-industrial expedition headed by seafarers G.G. Izmailov and D.I. Bocharov visited the north-west coast of Alaska on the ship called "Three Saints". In June the participants of the expedition stopped at Yakutat Bay populated by the Eyak and Tlingit people from who several objects were acquired. Later the ship stopped in Ltua Bay. Here the Russians gave generous presents to an Indian chief who, in return, gave them "one new beaver and six beaver carpets". These Tlingit objects were given by G.G. Izmailov and D.D. Bocharov to H.I. Shelikhov. He sent them to governor-general of Siberia I.A.Pil’, and the latter sent them to St.-Petersburg as a gift to Catherine II. In 1790 these items were handed to the Kunstkamera and started the Museum's Tlingit collection.

In 1803-1806 the first Russian round-the-world expedition was organized headed by I.F. Kruzenstern and Yu.F. Lisyanski, who commanded ships "Nadezhda" and "Neva" respectively. "Neva" visited the Russian America. In 1804 it dropped anchor in Pavlovskaya
Harbor of Kodiak Island. After one month the ship sailed to Sitka Island. The crew spent the winter of 1804–1805 on Kodiak Island, and in June 1805 "Neva" left from the Russian America. During his stay in the Russian America Yu.F. Lisyanski acquired an interesting ethnographical collection which he handed to the Kunstkamera on his return to St.-Petersburg. Later many other seafarers (V.M. Golovnin, L.A. Gagemeister, S.P. Khruschiov, M.P. Lazarev) donated their collections to the Museum. Several objects were received from I.A. Kupreyanov, who in 1835-1840 was the governor of the Russian territories in America.

Acquisition of a number of later collections is related to the name of I.G. Voznesenski. In 1836 the Kunstkamera was divided into seven separate museums, including the Asian and the Ethnographical museum. Since none of the Russian members of the Academy of Sciences was at the time engaged in ethnographic work, E.I. Shrader, who was curator of the Zoological museum, was appointed curator of the Ethnographical museum as well.

After the division of the Kunstkamera it became obvious that the American collections of these new museums are very small in number. To replenish them, it was decided to send one of the researchers to the Russian America. I.G. Voznesenski, who was E.I. Shrader's assistant in the Zoological museum was appointed for this mission. He spent about five years (1840 – 1845) in the Russian America and collected over a thousand exhibits on the ethnography of the indigenous people of the region.

Another interesting collection is linked with the name of a mountain engineer P.P. Doroshin, who in 1845 graduated from the Institute of Mountain Engineering in the rank of a lieutenant and served, after doing some practical work, in the Russian-American Company. P.P. Doroshin spent several years between 1848 and 1853 in the Russian America.

In May, 1891, the Museum received a collection on the Tlingit culture from an orthodox missionary in Alaska named Georgi Chudnovski. Original, the collection contained 96 objects. At present, several items of this collections are kept in the Museum of the History of Religion.

On the whole, the MAE possess 131 objects of the Tlingit culture, and 10 photographs and drawings of exhibits which are missing. Some of them were given in exchange for other objects to other European and American museums in the beginning of the 20th century, some of them were transferred in 1930–1932 to the Museum of the History of Religion and Atheism in Leningrad, some objects were lost during World War II. The present catalogue not only presents the objects currently kept in the Museum, but also photographs and drawings of objects that once belonged to it. A number of items is accompanied by old illustrations which helps reconstruct their original appearance.

Of special importance is the fact that the MAE not only possesses separate objects (clothes, armor, shaman attributes, etc.) but also whole sets of objects. In some cases comparison of
similar items which date to different periods allows to trace the changes in some elements of the Tlingit culture and to bring to light influences of other peoples - indigenous as well as European. The catalogue contains the descriptions of several exhibits whose ethnical attribution is disputable, as well as objects which were acquired from the Tlingit people, but produced by their neighbors.

Introductory articles to different sections of the catalogue and descriptions of objects contain quotations from written sources of the 18th - 19th centuries. Thus, two groups of sources are presented in the catalogue: ethnographical objects from the collection of the MAE (Kunstkamera) RAS and their descriptions by collectors and other people who witnessed the Tlingit culture.