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1823.

## X.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE PANDOO COOLIES IN MALABAR:

WITH FOUR DRAWINGS.

By J. BABINGTON, Esq.

[Communicated by S. Babington, Esq.]

*Read 26th December, 1820.*

LIKE the Pandoo Coolies on the eastern side of the Ghauts, the Kodey Kulls, Topie Kulls, or Pandoo Koolies, are generally to be found on the top of eminences, or on the sloping sides of such hills in Malabar as are not wooded. They seem to vary in their shape according to the nature of the soil or rock on which they are constructed. The soil of the hills on which they are found is generally a red gravel, and the substratum of rock known as the *laterite*, or pudding-stone as it is frequently called. Where the soil is of considerable depth, the large chatty\* of baked clay shown in the Drawing A (No. IV.) is generally found alone, and is the depository of the bones, beads, arms, &c. which are found in most of these sepulchres; but where the soil is of trifling extent, or where the bare rock only is found, the caves are usually dug out of it in a regular form, and are indicated by the Kodey Kull, so called from its being shaped like the umbrella or chettery in common use among the natives, the first word signifying in Malabar a chettery, and the last a stone. The Topie Kull is a large space between them, and under the top stone, in shape having a strong resemblance to a mushroom. Apparently they are intended to be used in the same way as the chatties: but although I have opened several of these I have never found any relic in them, and am therefore inclined to think that such as I have examined, either have never been used as de-

\* Earthen pot.

positaries of the dead ; or if they have, that from the free admission of the atmospheric air into the hollow space I have mentioned, their original contents have crumbled into dust. Those that I have displayed have uniformly been very promising and perfect, but they have always been empty ; and I have never been able to find any cave in the rock where they were situated which they might have served to indicate. The large Topie Kull in the Drawing C (No. 1), I opened in November 1819 ; and though from its situation, size, and appearance, I was led to expect my labour would not have been in vain, nothing was found in the hollow space between the stones which supported the Topie Kull, and which were themselves placed on the solid rock. The Kodey Kulls, on the other hand, which are much less imposing in their appearance, have always rewarded my researches with urns, bones, arms, iron instruments of various shapes, and in some instances with beads of different shapes, colours, and materials. Hitherto I have found no coin of any description, nor any other article that can throw any light upon the period of the construction of these singular and universally-diffused specimens of ancient sepulchres ; unless it may be considered that the Trisullum I found in one of them, and which is sketched in the Drawing B (No. I.), determines their origin to be Hindoo. Reports have frequently reached me of figures of Ganeish, Christna, &c., and of ancient coins having been found in this description of tombs ; but I have always ascertained them to be unfounded ; and I am inclined to think, if any such have been found, that it was not in any Kodey Kull, or Pandoo Koolie, but in some secure depository of a different description.

It is almost unnecessary to say that there is no record of these antiquities, of the period of their construction, or the use for which they were originally intended : that they were used as the depositories of the dead at some period, is, I think, unquestionable, as I have seldom or never opened one that did not contain a number of bones, either calcined or so much decayed as to fall into powder after a short exposure to the air. That they were human bones I have also been satisfied, by finding the lower jaw with the teeth entire, in a recent instance. The theories of the

natives on the subject of these sepulchres are various : by some they are supposed to be the works of the Punduvans, and by others they are attributed to the agency of gods and genii. One very absurd origin is given to them, and is the most generally credited ; it is, that at some very early period of the world men did not die, but after increasing in stature gradually for a number of years, they dwindled to pygmies of a few inches in length, when they ceased to eat and drink, or to perform most of the other functions of animal life, and were in this state of doubtful existence inclosed in these tombs, with the implements and arms they had used when in the enjoyment of their faculties ! Absurd as this account is, it is not more improbable than various others that are current, of the origin and use of the Kodey Kulls. A very fine powder or sand is found generally at the bottom of the chatties, most probably the remains of animal matter from the dead bodies or bones placed in them. It is shining, and appears mixed with minute particles of mica : which perhaps has given rise to the idea generally entertained, that this substance is pure gold when in the cave unexposed to the light ; but through the agency of spirits becomes sand when viewed by mortal eye !

There are many places in Malabar where the Kodey Kulls are found ; but in no situation do they exist in greater numbers and preservation than on a hill named Chataperambah, which is excavated in every direction with caves of this description. It is singular that the Malayalum or Malabar name of this place should give a complete description of it ; being literally *the field* (compound, &c.) *of death*, Chatum peramba. Whether this coincidence is accidental, or the name were given to it originally, and handed down to the present race, I know not ; but I am inclined to be of the latter opinion, as there are several other places in the district with the same name, and I understand also of the same description, with this spot, which is situated on a hill rising abruptly from the southern bank of the Beypoor river, and about five miles to the eastward of the village of that name. Two of the mushroom-shaped Kodey Kulls were on an eminence about a mile to the westward of this hill ; but none of that description are on the hill of Chataperambah. Nearly on the highest point,

nine or ten of the kind sketched in the Drawing A (No. 1.) were placed in irregular order, and others of the same kind at some distance. These, with about fifty or sixty others on the hill, having a small circular opening, as in A (No. 3.), which widened gradually as it descended to the depth of about eight feet,—were opened by me at several different visits I made to the spot for the purpose. There being no stone over the mouth of these latter, I discovered them by the rank appearance and height of the grass of the spot, owing to the depth of soil in the opening being greater than on the surrounding rock. That these latter have originally been covered by a stone I have every reason to be satisfied, from finding large broken pieces of granite stone in the caves, whilst the surrounding solid rock was of laterite; and no granite is to be found within some miles of the hill.—On this hill, by the same means I discovered a cave similar to one found some years ago at Neelcaperamba; and of which I shall hereafter forward a sketch, with a section and dimensions, to complete, as far as I am able, the series of these interesting remains of the antiquities of this coast. At present I shall content myself with observing, that these latter caves and their contents are in better preservation than any others: from the circumstance of there being no opening at the top (the only aperture being at the side, and that carefully covered by a stone of the same dimension with it), very little of the soil can make its way into the cave, to disturb or injure its contents. It was in this cave that I discovered the Trisulum No. 1, the large Jar No. 5, the Tripod No. 11, the Lamp No. 15, and the highly-glazed Chatties Nos. 8, 10, 18, and 19, in the accompanying Sketch marked B; and the several iron instruments, Nos. 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 22, in the Drawing C; the use of some of which, particularly 5, 6, 9 and 15, I am unable to state with any certainty.

In the accompanying Drawing A, No. 2 represents one of the Kodey Kulls at Chataperambah, before opening it; No. 1 a section of the same when opened by me, with some of its contents; and No. 3 the appearance of one of the circular openings at the same place, which I have noticed; and as it may tend to throw some light upon the subject, I shall here de-

scribe the mode observed by me in opening the Kodey Kulls of the description of No. 1.

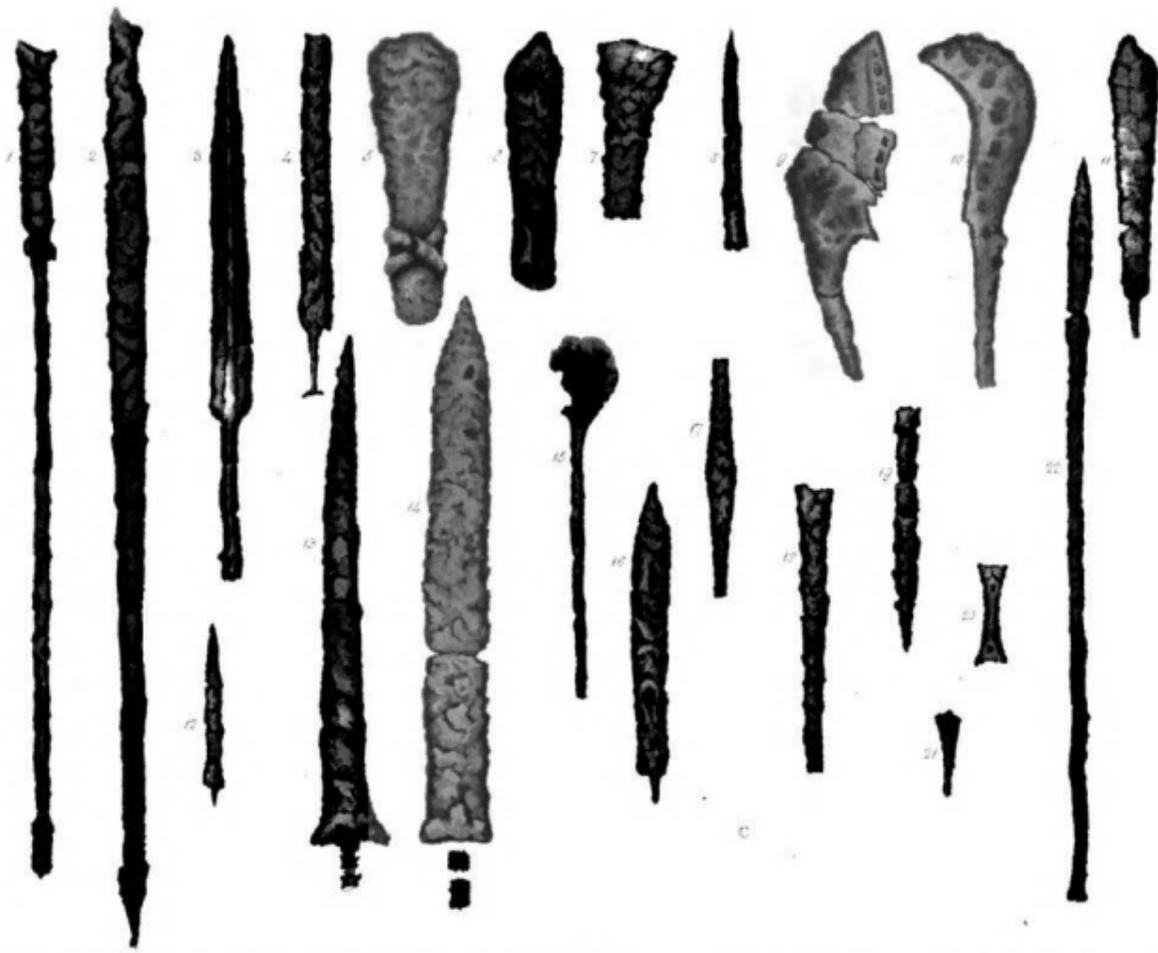
Having carefully removed the earth from and around the covering-stone of the cave (No. 2), to prevent it from falling into the latter and breaking or disarranging its contents, I caused the stone to be cut into four parts and turned over the edge of the cave. This was by no means an easy task, from the great size and weight of the stone; which was from 6 to 8 feet in diameter, and from 2 to 3 feet thick in the centre, becoming gradually thinner to the edge, where it was not more than 6 or 8 inches thick. When the stone was carried away, the earth which covered the mouth of the cave was removed; all possible care being taken not to disarrange or break any of the contents. These consisted of a few iron instruments, and chatties containing bones, and the light sand I have already noticed; and rested on the edge of the projecting rock in the cave (8). In the centre of the cave, and parallel with the edge of the ledge of the rock, was a circular piece of granite stone (5), similar in shape to the large covering-stone (2), but so small as to be easily raised by two men. The earth being removed all around, this stone was gently raised and carried out of the cave; when it was found to have covered the mouth of a large chatty or urn (4) of about five feet in height and four in diameter, composed of a thick clay mixed with sand; and not more than half baked, the centre being black and gritty. On lowering a lamp into the chatty, a smaller one was observed in it of the shape and appearance of that in the Drawing B, marked 19, (and placed in the same position as therein shown,) with several still smaller around it; as 10, 12, 17, 18, and 21 of the Sketch. These several chatties were half filled with, and nearly surrounded by, the light shining sand I have before mentioned, mixed with bones, which were carefully removed by the hand; and in the chatty No. 19 was found a smaller one (20) apparently better made (being black throughout, and glazed highly), which contained the whitish transparent beads (No. 4); together with a small greenish stone, also transparent, but which could not be preserved, as it fell into

small pieces immediately after it was exposed to the air. On carefully washing and sifting the earth which had fallen into the cave, and the transparent sand, other beads, as shown by Nos. 6, 7, 14, 15, and 16, were taken out of the large chatty. The latter was then broken, and removed from the cave, which was found to terminate on the spot where it had rested. A few iron instruments (as shown in C., 4, 12, 16,) were found to rest on the ledge of the rock in the cave; and the smaller articles of the same kind, Nos. 20 and 21, were found with the beads, bones, &c., inside the large urn or chatty. The hollow space (6) was then cleared out, and it was found to be a descent communicating with the cave by a square door at the side, which was carefully closed by a stone (No. 7), also square, pressing upon it. Nothing was found in this outer cave but some broken pieces of chatty, the original shape of which could not be ascertained.—It may be proper to notice, ere closing this description, that although the beads (No. 4) were found as shown in the Drawing (excepting that there was, of course, no string to keep them together), the other beads were not all discovered in one cave, but in several of those opened on the same spot, and were subsequently arranged as shown in the Drawing marked B. They are all, with the other articles shown in the Drawing, in my possession.

The circular openings (No. 3 in the Drawing marked A), of which I examined a great number, were not so curious or interesting as those I have described, in consequence of the earth having fallen into the cave (together with the covering stone), and broken its original contents.—These caves were in the shape of a blunt cone; and exclusive of the opening at the top, which was always circular, and about three feet in diameter, there was in every cave a square door in the middle closed by a stone in the same manner as described in the cave No. 1, and another opening on the surface of the ground, leading down by steps to the side-opening of the cave; so that a communication could be held with the interior of the cave without removing the top stone, as in the Kodey Kalls. The original shape of the chatties in these caves could not in general be ascertained, from their being much broken and injured; but in some in-

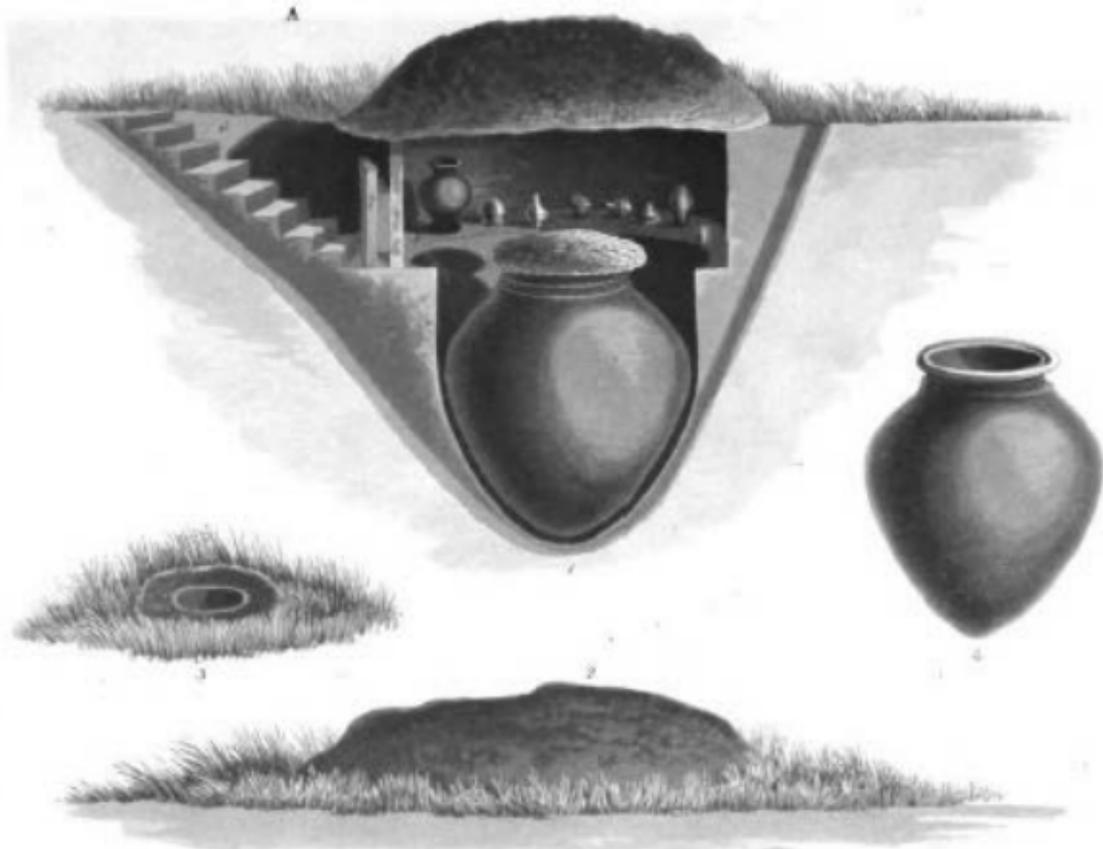
stances I found tall urns, the remains of very large chatties, and some tolerably perfect, resting upon small supporters of the same materials, sometimes three, and at other times four in number, as shown by No. 8 of the Drawing marked B. Several iron instruments were also found in these caves, such as spears, swords, knives, axes; and some others, the intention of which it is almost impossible to conjecture, as they bear no resemblance to any thing in use in the present day.

The Drawing which accompanies this memorandum, marked E, represents two very perfect Topee Kalls, situated to the eastward of a village named Puddiangaddy, on the high road to Palghaut; where they are still to be seen. The Sketch D was taken of another of these Topee Kalls, not far distant from the others, ere it was examined and consequently destroyed by me in November 1819, when engaged in investigating the subject of these antiquities on the western coast—Calicut.



Archaeological Collection, University of Cambridge





Red by Longman, Brown, Green & Co. 1850.

*A. K. Holby's cut of a Mole.*

*A. K. Holby's cut of the Mole, showing the entrance.*

*A. K. Holby's cut of the Mole, showing the mouth of the large chamber.*

*L. G. G. G. G.*

35



32



Engraving from the *Journal of the Asiatic Society*, 1824.

J. Clark del.

*Stone Wall near Palanpur in the Belahant District*