

The CID Idol Wing demonstrates the TN Police motto-‘Truth always Tirumphs’



There are around 190 Siva temples; most of them are erected on the banks of river Cauvery in Cholamandalam. Thirueengoimalai Siva temple however is built on the top of the Thirueengoimalai Hill, from where the presiding deity surveys his disciples and worshippers. This hill is also referred to as Himalayas of the South.

Maragathasaleswarar thirukoil as this temple is called, is located at what is today known as Thirueengoimalai Village, in Thottiyam Taluk of Trichi District. According to legend, Agasthiyar, came to worship Lord Maragathasaleswarar. Finding the main door closed, he used his mystical power to change his human form in to that of an insect. After taking a bath in adjoining canal he went inside the temple and worshipped the deity and also offered puja before flying to the canal. If you visit this temple you are likely to hear about this myth, that after a dip in the water he regained his original human. This lore lends a special status to this historical temple, and mystical values are attributed to it. Traditionally the pujas and rituals were conducted five times daily. As a worshippers' proverb goes, the deity changes form 'Kadambar in the morning, to Chokkar in the afternoon and Thiru Engoimalai Nathar in the evening.'

On 3rd December however, it was not Agasthiyar but some human with criminal intent that came in the darkness of night. Lacking any magical power to enter the doors of the temple that the culprits found locked, they entered into the temple by the simple old fashioned expedient of thieves – breaking and entry. The early rays of the sun brought to light the break-in and the loss of the Idols of Pradosa Amman made of metal and a Sivalinga ‘Banam’ sculpted in stone. Based on the report of Chandrasekar, Executive Officer of the temple, a case was filed in Thottiyam Police Station under Crime No.489//04 under sections 457 & 380 of the IPC. Local police made supreme efforts and investigated the records of more than 2000 persons and browsed through the modus operandi of criminals. A record number of 450 finger prints lifted from the crime scene were compared with those of ex-convicts and known felons, but the effort proved futile. The case was then transferred to the Idol Wing CID on 22nd January 2005, a month and a half later, leaving the CIDs very cold trail to follow.

By pursuing serious lines of enquiry and following a scientific approach the Idol Wing CID team painstakingly followed leads for over 6 months before they managed to arrest 5 suspects on 19th July 2007, and produced them before the Judicial Magistrate at Musiri, who remanded them to custody.

Investigations and interrogation of the accused revealed that they were misled into believing that the stone lingam was actually a ‘maragatham’ which is an extremely precious stone. But after breaking the lingam they were shocked to find that it was not so, but just an ordinary stone. For when they tried to sell the pieces the culprits found that nobody wanted them, so they hid it in a canal. After months of relentless work, collecting and sifting and following through numerous information, the CID team managed to not only nab the culprits but also recover the stolen property. The priest of the Thirueengoimalai temple was able to identify the idol and lingam. For the Idol Wing it was only another day in their war against art theft.