



Cobra picking a leaf from the *bilva* tree in the garden of the Vishwanath Shiva Temple at Thepperumanallur in Tanjavur District, Tamil Nadu (left), and carrying it in its mouth to the Shiva lingam through the temple sanctum drain (right). This was witnessed by Sivachariar Satish the temple priest just before the solar eclipse on January 14, 2010 .



The cobra then went around the *vigraha* and climbed up the left side of the image, spread its hood and placed the *bilva* leaf on top of the lingam. It repeated this a number of times, climbing the *bilva* tree in the garden and bringing a leaf in its mouth back to the *vigraha* and placing it on top of the Shiva lingam. When a crowd gathered, the snake hissed at those devotees who got too close to it.



You can see the Hood of the Cobra on top of the Sivalinga and the body on the left side.

The cobra can be seen draped down the Shiva lingam on the right side of the photo, with its hood spread and head resting on top of the image. According to the temple priest, Sivachariar Satish, this is the third time the cobra has appeared to do *bilva archana* on a solar eclipse day. Many people witnessed this extraordinary event in the Vishwanath Temple at Thepperumanallur village near Kumbakonam in Tamil Nadu. – Photos by Thenappan in Thirunageshwaran.