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VANDALS STRIKE AT GOLDEN DRAGON MUSEUM AND GREAT STUPA OF UNIVERSAL COMPASSION

The Great Stupa of Universal Compassion and the Golden Dragon Museum are working with Victoria Police following acts of vandalism that occurred at both cultural attractions earlier this month.

On Sunday May 5, 2024, between 1.30pm and 2pm, a man, woman and two, young female children visited the Dai Gum San precinct and walked through the Yi Yuan Gardens, Guan Yin Temple and Golden Dragon Museum, where the woman appeared to discreetly flick a light oily substance from a water bottle.

Statues, stonework, temple artifacts, artwork, and parading dragons Sun Loong and Loong were targeted.

At about 3pm the same group visited the Great Stupa, where the woman again flicked contents from a water bottle onto religious objects.

Approximately a dozen statues, both inside and outside the Stupa, have been damaged.

CCTV footage of both sites shows the group was deliberate in its approach. The vandalism was reported separately to Victoria Police last week.

Golden Dragon Museum General Manager Hugo Leschen said he had been working closely with Victoria Police and assisting with inquiries.

“An attack of this nature, on culturally sensitive objects that have high heritage significance, is extremely serious and hugely upsetting and disappointing for our staff, the local Chinese community and everyone who takes pride in Bendigo’s unique history,” Mr Leschen said.

“Loong is listed with Heritage Victoria, which has been advised of the vandalism. Fortunately, the damage to him is minor, and limited to a tiny drop of fluid behind the lip and mouth, and some residue on a glossy surface that we hope can be removed with the appropriate treatment.

“However, within the mouth of Sun Loong, the oily liquid has been absorbed and seeped across the open mouth of the dragon, damaging the silk and paper that he is made of.

“It is hoped no permanent damage has been caused but the liquid is both clear and does not smell, so it is difficult to know at this stage what it is.”

Great Stupa Chairman Ian Green said there is a long list of damage to treasured pieces.



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“The objects at the Stupa are considered sacred and many have been entrusted to the Great Stupa by various faith-based communities to help preserve and celebrate their traditions, providing a space for worship and fellowship,” Mr Green said.

“We expect at least a dozen statues have been targeted, both inside and outside the Great Stupa, including sculptures that we had just finished painting. Due to the nature of the liquid, we are seeing paint lifting on our Saint Francis of Assisi statue and the liquid has also permanently stained a granite wall.

“We estimate the repair bill will run into the tens of thousands of dollars and we will work to repair what we can.”

Both the Golden Dragon Museum and Great Stupa remain open and encourage anyone with any knowledge of these incidents to contact Crime Stoppers on 1800 333 000.

All media enquiries – City of Greater Bendigo Communications Manager Aleisha Verwoert North,
0407 797 479