

## ***Birth And Education of Tenali Ramalinga***



Bhuvana Vijayam, the royal court of Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu comprised of eight wise and learned men collectively titled as Ashta Diggajas. Tenali Ramalinga was prominently one among them. He was also known as Tenali Ramakrishna.

Tenali Ramalinga was known for his attentiveness, alertness, time tuning, wit, and intelligence. Ramalinga said to be hailing from Tenali town, set it as his surname. In the modern times, Tenali is in Guntur district of Andhra Pradesh on the banks of Holy River Krishna.

Ramalinga was popular as Vikatakavi. Right from his childhood, Ramalinga was centre of attraction among the children of his age groups in the region. His versatile mentality, intellect and aggressiveness brought him laurels and fame.

A Saint passing by, one day watched Ramalinga closely and could identify the 'celestial spark' shining from within him. The Saint, as he was in the devotional path, also recognised the inherent qualities of command and intelligence interlaced in Ramalinga.

The Saint called Ramalinga by name and asked him to accompany to a place. With the natural quality of fearlessness, Ramalinga accepted the invitation without even asking, "where to?" The Saint and Ramalinga walked little away from the crowd and reached Goddess Mahakali Temple in the woods.

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Arranging to perform a divine sacrifice to please the Goddess Mahakali, the Saint told Ramalinga, "My dear child! I am growing old and gradually losing the physical strength to perform puja to seek the blessings of the Goddess Mother."

He continued, "You are having all the qualities and blessings of the Mother to please Her and receive Her blessings." Preaching a mantra into Ramalinga's ear the Saint said, "Chant this mantra continuously and pray the Goddess every evening. Put in all your concentration and strength to please the Goddess. Goddess Mahakali will shower many boons on you."

After the sacrifice, the Saint left the place and never returned there. It had become a routine for Ramalinga to chant the mantra and pray the Goddess Mahakali every evening, at the designated Temple in the woods. Time passed by, and Ramalinga continued his prayers.

One day, Goddess Mahakali appeared in front of Ramalinga in the form of a Motherly figure. She was holding two small silver bowls in her palms. She started speaking to Ramalinga in a blissful tone, "My Child! I am pleased with the prayers you had been offering to me. I wish to bless you with a boon. You see the two utensils on my palms. One is filled with milk and the other with curd." Ramalinga was looking at her with shining eyes.

Goddess continued, "If you consume the milk, you will be a great scholar. In case, you wish to take the curd, you will be blessed with riches for all your life. However, take caution. You should take only one of them."

With a lightening speed, Ramalinga not bothered by the Goddess' words grabbed both the bowls from Her hands and gulped down the contents. Goddess Mahakali was puzzled with his act. "What did you do?" She questioned him. Unmoved Ramalinga answered in a requesting tone, "Hey Mother! Goddess Jaganmatha! What is the use of becoming a scholar without any wealth? Similarly, there will not be any purpose to the riches without intelligence. Hence, I thought I should have both of them and drank the contents of both the utensils. Kindly pardon me Mother, if I had done any mistake."

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Mother Mahakali was pleased with his frankness and analytical evaluation at that tender age. Imposing some sanctions, She blessed Ramalinga with two boons before She disappeared. She said, "You will have both intellect and wealth. There will be problems with the riches you gather by associating with the rulers. The poetry you author will be filled with uniqueness."

Ramalinga was extremely happy over the happenings. He thought the boons were apt to his nature and versatile psychology.

There were many occasions wherein Ramalinga emerged as a centre of attraction with his versatile acts, wit, and humour filled conversations. Of course, sarcastic element was the prime composition of Ramalinga.

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