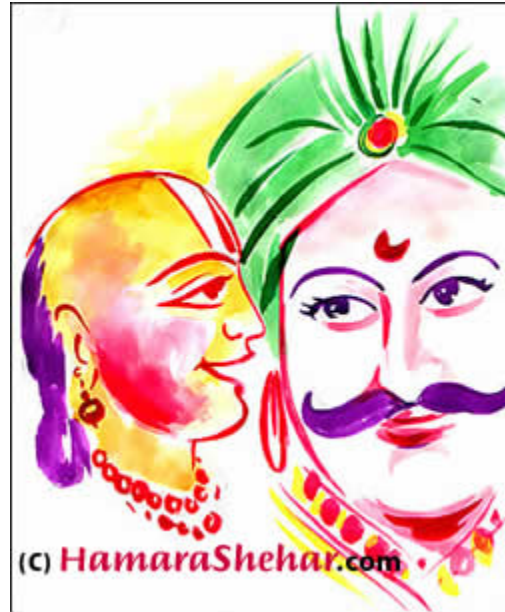


## Tenali Ramalinga

The Vijaya Nagar Empire has a prominent place in the pre-independence period of the Indian sub-continent. Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu, among the rulers of the Vijaya Nagar Kingdom, has transformed his regime into a Golden Era for the history books.

This was possible through Rayalu's courage, righteousness and revered patronage. A Poet named Ramalinga added feathers to the crown of reputation of Rayalu. Tenali Ramalinga or Tenali Rama, as he was famous by, belonged to a town called Tenali and that stuck as his Surname.



Tenali is an important town in Coastal Andhra Pradesh's Guntur District. Tenali is also famous as "Andhra Paris."

Rayalu's court known as 'Bhuvana Vijayam' (Global Victor) was strongly upheld by eight poets called "Ashta Diggajas" (Elephants taking care of all the eight sides). Those eight's combination was the strongest ever and was invincible for any scholar or Master of Arts and Sciences during those days. Tenali Ramalinga shined among the eight as a precious diamond in the diamond studded crown.

Bhuvana Vijayam was host for discussions, arguments, and competitions of the learned and masters, almost all through the rule of the King of Kings Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu.

The historians and chroniclers found a synonymity between Akbar – Birbal and Rayalu – Ramalinga. However, despite the commonness among the two combinations, a small line distincts Birbal and Ramalinga. While Birbal was famous for his delicate and involving humour, Ramalinga was stern and sarcastic in his wit to puncture the shields of proudness the others had.

The records also state that Ramalinga was instrumental in protecting the King Rayalu and his prestige many a time, coming to his rescue in critical situations. A popular story among the commoners narrates how Ramalinga protected the Vijaya Nagar Empire from getting into

the clutches of Delhi Sultans through his timely wit interlaced with a perfect strategy.

The most popular stories about the lifestyle, combination, and co-ordination of Rayalu and Ramalinga spread the message of intellect, time tuning, and strategic stroking besides lively wit and humour.

HamaraShehar.com is attempting to present some of the selectively collected stories for its citizens and browsers to hold their bellies before they read the laughing gas about the 'activities' of Ramalinga in and out of the royal court of Rayalu.

### [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.

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."

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.

### Ramalinga’s Entry Into Bhuvana Vijayam

Ramalinga was mischievous during his childhood. His childishness cheered some and troubled some. His activities were pleasure to some and humiliation to others. Once, while Ramalinga was pursuing his academics, the provincial ruler visited the school as part of checking the standards of the school.



He questioned the children in the classroom, “Who among you is the most intelligent?”

Silence spread in the class. No child dared to give reply to the King’s question. Meanwhile, Ramalinga sprung up from his seat and answered with confidence, “I am the intelligent student in the class.” The King appreciated Ramalinga’s confidence and courage. Calling him closer, the King enquired him about several things and blessed him, “You will go places my child.”

Similarly, Ramalinga grew big and made his presence felt in history.

Ramalinga practised poetry and composition along with command on language and grammar. Mingling with a group of minstrels, he learnt the art of spontaneous poetry composing techniques at Tenali.

He made himself a perfectionist in Sanskrit and Telugu (Andhra) languages. Gradually, in the natural process of growing up, he was married and was blessed with children. From then onwards, he was compelled to find ways to earn a living and feed his family.

He learnt that Vijaya Nagar ruler Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu was a revered patron for poetry and poets besides being a scholar in Kannada, Andhra and Sanskrit languages on par. Every poet and scholar with some skill in the vast Vijaya Nagar empire was longing for getting into the Bhuvana Vijayam, the royal court of Rayalu. Ramalinga headed for Vijaya Nagar with a similar thought and wish in him.

First, he approached the royal priest Thathacharya and laid his heart before him, after exhibiting his skills. Thathacharya promised Ramalinga to introduce him to the King Rayalu. Satisfied Ramalinga spent many a days in vain, waiting for the opportunity.

Ramalinga was vexed and started hunting for alternative ways that would gain entry into the court. He then located Nandi Thimmana, another scholar who had a permanent place in the royal court. Ramalinga approached Thimmana and appeased him with his expertise in spontaneous poetry.

Thimmana felicitated Ramalinga by presenting him with a Kashmir Shawl, which was presented to him by King Rayalu the previous day for his performance.

The next day, Ramalinga adorning the Kashmiri Shawl on his shoulders walked into the royal court. King Rayalu was discussing various issues with the courtiers at that time. Rayalu was surprised to see a stranger in the Shawl that was presented to Thimmana couple of days before. A straight question came from the King Rayalu, "Where did you get this shawl?"

With all humbleness Ramalinga replied, "My King! Thimmana could have satisfied you with his proficiency. I was fortunate enough to please that great personality with my poetry. Thimmana, pleased with my expertise..." he continued, "presented me this shawl felicitating me at his residence. I am wearing this to exhibit my competence."

Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu was impressed by the way Ramalinga presented himself in the court. The King also appreciated the intelligence and presence of mind Ramalinga had. Immediately Rayalu offered a position to Ramalinga in his court.

Thus was the entry of Ramalinga into Bhuvana Vijayam.

## Mahabharat and Delhi Sultan's wish

Mohammedans ruled parts of the sub-continent with Delhi as their capital for over two centuries. Few of the Mohammedan rulers maintained patience towards Hindu rituals and maintained communal harmony encouraging Hindu scholars and prophets.



Delhi was in Adil Shah's rule concurrently while Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu was ruling Vijaya Nagar. A war broke out between the two kingdoms for supremacy over one another. At one stage, both the rulers felt there was a need to establish peace in the region. Adil Shah invited Rayalu to Delhi for finalising the peace treaty.

Hoping to utilise the opportunity to establish a cordial relation between the two empires, Rayalu headed for Delhi with a big team comprising of poets, dancers, scholars and others. At Delhi, Adil Shah gave red carpet welcome to Rayalu. During the pleasant rounds of discussions, Adil Shah urged the scholars and poets from the Rayalu band to recite some sequences from the epic Mahabharat.

The visitors recited several sequences to please the Delhi Sultan. It was then that trouble shot up for the Vijaya Nagar ruler. Adil Shah expressed his wish and requested Rayalu to make his men rewrite the Mahabharat portraying him and his friends as Pandavas and his rivals as Kauravas. The total visiting team was shocked to hear the Sultan. They somehow managed to close the day's meeting immediately.

Rayalu was worried about the development. He called for an emergency meeting with the learned persons of his team. In the meeting, he sought suggestions from them to avert the problem. Everyone started scratching their heads to find an amicable solution. None could come out with any concrete proposal. After watching all this, suddenly Ramalinga raised and put his proposal before Rayalu.

He said, "My Lord! I think there is not much for you or us to get so much worried and burdened about the Delhi Sultan's wish about Mahabharat. You please leave the problem onto my shoulders and have a relaxed sleep. I will solve the problem without any problem."

The King Rayalu had his own doubts about the safety of the kingdom and its people.

“Ramalinga...” Rayalu said, “...I am aware that you are a genius. However, it is not a common situation. Dealing with the Delhi Sultan is not an easy job. It is similar to fete on the edge of a sword. You should be very careful!” He was worried that if the problem was not dealt properly, there was a chance that Delhi Sultan might declare a war on Vijaya Nagar.

Ramalinga was stiff to his argument and assured everyone to leave the matter to him. The big heads of the meeting could not comprehend how Ramalinga was confident that he could solve this ‘so easily!’ Anyway, they told each other, as we could not come out with any proposal for the solution, let him handle this. The meeting finally nominated Ramalinga to take care of the situation.

Next morning, the court was packed with both the rulers and their henchmen. Adil Shah recalled his wish about re-composing of the Mahabharat. Ramalinga rose from his seat and saluted the Sultan. “Huzoor! All of our poets are into the job assigned by your majesty’s wish. However, every one of us is stuck at one specific issue. It is not proper for us to discuss the subject in the court. If you can kindly permit me, I wish to present the poking issue before you in private.”

Adil Shah thought that there should really be some problem and consented for the one-on-one meeting with Ramalinga in a separate room. Ramalinga folding hands and presenting all respects to the Sultan in his words started, “Your Highness! You are the king of kings! It was our pleasure to know about your inclination about our epics like Mahabharat. The poets and scholars started re-composing the whole epic, in accordance to your majesty’s wish. You are being portrayed as Dharmaraja, eldest of Pandavas and your friends as Bheema, Arjuna, Nakula and Sahadeva.”

Ramalinga paused a second and continued, “This is where we had to scratch our brains...” However he was not forth coming with the problem. Adil Shah waited and when it was clear that he has to get it out of Ramalinga he ordered, “What is the problem? Tell me clearly and quickly.”

“You are aware Huzoor! That Pandavas are five. All the five were married to Draupadi and were sharing her equally...” Ramalinga stressed, “We are unable to portray your image as Dharmaraja in this regard, thinking about the prestige of the King of Kings....”

Long before Ramalinga could complete, Adil Shah hastened to say, "Stop this nonsense now. I cannot take this anymore. Stop rewriting Mahabharat immediately. I can never accept this."

Ramalinga tried to say... "Huzoor! We started to work as per your wish...now, how can we turn away from the word given to you by us...we..." "Look Poet!" Adil Shah raised his voice, "you should drop the Mahabharat topic as of now if you wish the friendship and co-operation between the two kingdoms to last long. Is that clear" and walked off the room.

Ramalinga bubbling with joy returned to his King Rayalu and his bandwagon of delegation and explained the whole sequence. Everyone including Rayalu appreciated the sharp intelligence and presence of mind Ramalinga had in solving the toughest problem just like that!

### [Thousand Gold Coins and a Handful Grain](#)

Simhapuri was a prominent town in the Vijaya Nagar empire. There lived a stunning beauty named Vidyullatha. She was a rich lady and well versed with prose, poetry and composition besides dance and music. Vidyullatha was famous as a proud woman in the region.



A hoarding appeared on the compound wall of the woman's house quoting as, "A reward of one thousand gold coins would be presented to those who can win over the Lady in the house. The competitors are required to prove their upper hand in humour, wit and scholarship." This became a prestigious issue for the scholars in the region.

Many responded to the open invitation and barged into her house, individually, to test their fate through the fete. Surprisingly, everyone whoever walked into Vidyullatha's house lost in the battle and came out with chins down. The list of losers was steadily growing and after sometime there were no takers to the invitation.

Days were passing like this. One morning, a vendor with a load of firewood on his head started shouting in front of her house, "Firewood...strong firewood...excess heat generating firewood..." he continued the sequence for sometime. Vidyullatha thinking that his noise was growing unbearable walked on to the threshold and enquired, "How much do you sell the load for?"

An instant reply came from the vendor, "I will not sell this for money. If you can give me a handful grain I will give you all the load." Assuring him to give more grains, Vidyullatha ordered him to dump the load in the backyard and return to collect the grains.

The vendor unloaded the weight off his head then and there started to argue, "There is no bargain in this deal Madam! I will sell this to you only if you can give me a handful grain, did you get it" he stressed, "a handful grain." The rich woman got disgusted with the vendor's behaviour, "Hey you bloody vendor. Stop crying, I will give you what you wanted." She said, "throw them in the backyard and come here."

The Vendor was adamant and made his firewood load's price much more clearer, "There is no change in the deal Madam. I said a handful grain...that means nothing more or less...it should be a handful grain. If you cannot pay the price, you should pay me one thousand gold coins and wipe the invitation hoarding on the compound wall."

Vidyullatha yelled at him, "What nonsense are you trying to talk?" The vendor replied on par with her, "There is not any nonsense. I told you the price, you agreed for it and now if you cannot pay the price, stand by my wish. You should give the one thousand gold coins. That is it."

The fire broke out between Vidyullatha and the firewood vendor. Both started arguing and shouting at each other. The local people started gathering in front of the house to witness and know what is happening and why is the Lady was having a tiff with an ordinary vendor. Tired of shouting, both resorted to approach the provincial Court of Law for justice.

Vidyullatha presented her argument, "My Lord! This firewood vendor must have gone crazy. He is not ready to accede to my offer, though I wished to pay him more. He is sticking to his senseless argument to have a handful grain. He demands later for payment of a thousand gold coins and wiping away the invitation hoarding. I plead for justice."

The Judge looked at the vendor and asked him what was his problem. Folding hands the vendor started in a humble manner, "Yes

Your Majesty. She was right to some extent. However, I am not crazy. I informed her beforehand that the load of firewood would cost her a handful grain."

He continued innocently, "When I was clear about a handful grain, she must have understood that I needed handful of grains. That was her mistake to mistake my quote for a handful grain. It means, one grain that fills the hand."

What more? Vidyullatha was speechless. Obviously, the verdict was in favour of the vendor. Vidyullatha was unable to comprehend that a handful grain meant so much. Shocked with the development and the judgement, she was compelled to pay him one thousand gold coins and wipe off the invitation from the compound wall.

The people of the region knew about this and told themselves that the years old proud ness of Vidyullatha was shattered to pieces in a single stroke. By the way, the vendor was Tenali Ramalinga.

On hearing about the problem Vidyullatha created with her hoarding, Ramalinga took due permission from the King Rayalu to take her to task. In the guise of firewood vendor, Ramalinga fulfilled his responsibility in all success.

### [The Last Wish - Mango Fruit](#)

Once when King Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu was ruling the Vijaya Nagar Empire, the royal mother fell sick and was bedridden. The medical professionals of the court declared that there was no chance for her to survive this episode and that she grew too old to respond to any medication.



One morning, she summoned Rayalu to her presence. "My Dear Son! I realise that I am close to death's door. I also do not have any hopes that my health would become better. However, I have a last wish."

She paused and asked, "Can you accomplish it for me before my soul is taken away?"

Rayalu was the King of Kings. His mother was on the deathbed, expressing her last wish. How could he turn away from it? He gently said, "Mother! Please tell me I will definitely accomplish your last wish" he assured.

"I..." she added, "...wish to eat a mango fruit, can you get me one?" in a feeble tone the mother asked Rayalu.

It was early summer. Trees had just started bearing tender fruits. There was no guarantee that royal mother would live until the tender ones ripened on the tree, Rayalu thought. It was also an insult to his royalty, if he was unable to fulfil his mother's last wish.

Immediately the King ordered his soldiers to scan through the fields of the kingdom and bring some ripe mangoes at any cost, immediately. The soldiers plunged into action. They did their best and returned with a basket filled with ripe mangoes. Eventually, just before the soldiers could place the basket before their King, king's mother breathed her last.

Rayalu was taken aback, for being unable to fulfil the last wish more than for her demise. He was shook deeply with the thought that his mother was dead even before her quench for mangoes was fulfilled. He slowly started to sink day after the day with the thoughts that were ripping him.

Rayalu invited Royal Master Thathacharya, explained his struggle, and sought an advice that would take the suffering off from him.

Thathacharya thought for a while and told the King, "My king! Your mother was fond of giving alms to the poor and needy. Her soul would rest in peace, if you can fulfil her last wish through donations. Order for preparing mangoes with gold and distribute them to Brahmins of the country."

The news spread like wildfire in the kingdom that Rayalu was doling out golden mangoes to Brahmins in the memory of his mother. Brahmins from all over the empire started flooding into the capital to accept the golden mango from the King. Day in and out, long queues were always seen only to add people to its tail.

With this, the gold reserves in the exchequer were melting down rapidly. Rayalu not bothering about the consequences was incessantly involved in donating golden mangoes to the Brahmins. He never heeded to the pleas and warnings of the Chief Minister Thimmarusu in this regard.

Thimmarusu was in confusion and did not know how to stop the King. He approached Ramalinga and urged for a solution to this in the interest of the kingdom and its people. Ramalinga assured Thimmarusu that he would check it at the earliest. "Go home and have a sound night sleep, Chief Minister. Everything will be alright by tomorrow evening" Ramalinga sent off Thimmarusu.

Next morning, Ramalinga went near the long queues and watched what was happening. He then selected a yard close to the queues and sat there, ordering the queue maintenance persons to send each of the Brahmins to him before sending him to Rayalu for the golden mango.

Everyone knew that Ramalinga was one of the close associates of the King. They thought that Ramalinga was doing so on the orders of the King and started sending the Brahmins first to Ramalinga before sending them into the palace.

Ramalinga told every Brahmin that there was a slight amendment to the donation process. "The King Rayalu wished to donate the golden mangoes to those who bore a blister from him" Ramalinga explained. Brahmins desirous of the gold first had a burn on their backs and went for the King's gold.

This went on until afternoon. In the later afternoon, one Brahmin pleaded Ramalinga to give him two burns and two golden mangoes. Ramalinga immediately fulfilled the Brahmins wish.

Then the Brahmin approached Rayalu. As usual, Rayalu handed him one mango. The Brahmin immediately requested the King, "My Lord! I had two burns please give me two golden mangoes."

The King Rayalu did not understand what was happening. He enquired, "What burns?" Then the Brahmin narrated the entire story about Ramalinga and burns to Rayalu.

The King shivering with anger called for Ramalinga and questioned him, "Ramalinga, what is happening. Why are you doing this brutality on these poor and innocent Brahmins?"

Ramalinga very politely and innocently, as if nothing was amiss, explained. "My Dear King! I am an unlucky person. Recently my mother succumbed to a chronic disease. She wished all during her bed ridden period to cauterise her back so that she could become healthy and live longer."

Wiping the tears dropping on his cheeks, Ramalinga continued, "Probably she would have lived. Nevertheless, I did not heed to her

requests. She died with it on her lips. I thought of presenting it to the Brahmins, as I failed to fulfil my mother's last wish.

However, me being a poor man cannot invite such huge number of Brahmins. Anyway, all of these had come on your invitation and I am trying to fulfil my mother's last wish in this manner. With all due respects to the King, I beg for pardon for my deeds, if I am wrong."

Rayalu analysed that Ramalinga was attempting to teach his a lesson. He then recalled Thimmarusu's pleas about the drastically dropping gold reserves in the exchequer.

Appreciating the presence of mind and loyalty, Rayalu immediately stopped the programme.

### [The Secret of Weaving Invisible Fabric](#)

A gorgeous woman entered the royal court of Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu when he was busy with the courtiers. With all her pleasing manners, attire and conversation, she attracted the gathering that day. After a little dialogue with the King and his prime staff, she took out the most delicate and flimsiest sari from a small box that would hardly be sufficient to place a pair of ear-tops.



Exhibiting the saree to the royal court attendants, she addressed the king, "King of Kings! A group of divine weavers are working for me. They can weave similar delicate, thinnest and beautiful saris. They are capable of weaving celestial fabric, which cannot be seen with the naked eye.

"If we have your majesty's blessings and support in addition to appropriate allocation of funds, they can do wonders and exhibit before the honourable King."

Satisfied with the exhibit, Rayalu believed her words. Allotting required funds for weaving the celestial fabric, Rayalu asked her to get the job done with thorough research and of course within the year.

The gorgeous woman and her weavers enjoyed the comforts and treatment extended by the King to the royal court guests for one year. Even after the lapse of one year, there was no news from the woman about the research nor the weavers exhibited any products before the King.

Ryalu ordered some of his employees to inspect the weavers' guesthouse and enquire about the weaving of celestial fabric that was fit to be worn by the Gods. The royal employees at once left for the guesthouse.

The woman welcomed the inspectors and took them to the location where the weavers were working seriously not even noticing the presence of guests in the room. The inspectors were aghast when they entered the room. There were no looms, no thread spools, not even a string of thread in the room. All the weavers sitting there were pretending to draw threads and weave. Every act was as if they were weaving something, with empty hands. The inspectors could not realise what was happening there. They asked the woman about the invisible fabric. She threw a lovely smile at them and told in a low husky voice. "Gentlemen, the invisible or celestial fabric is visible to only those who are pure along with purity of their parents. Of course, I believe that you can see the clarity of design and beauty of the craftsmanship of our weavers."

The inspectors were worried of being branded as sinners, if they spoke truth about what they saw. They did not dare to probe against the guests. Moreover, they appreciated the delicacy, accuracy, and what not about the work being done at the guesthouse. They stood by the roles they played at the guesthouse, in front of the King Ryalu too.

The feedback of the employees augmented the enthusiasm of Ryalu. He was eagerly waiting for the finished products to be exhibited before him and the royal court members. Some days later, Ryalu ordered his men to bring the weavers to his court along with the finished products.

An unusually big gathering assembled in the royal court to witness the celestial fabric exhibition. As part of the introductory speech, the weavers addressed the gathering. They pointed out that the fabric was made from various divine materials. Hence, they would be visible only to those who are clean by soul along with purity of their parents. The whole gathering went silent for a moment, as no one could see any fabric in the hands of the weavers. Still, they maintained, out of fear of humiliation, that they were able to view the exhibit, started applauding the beauty, and praised the weavers.

Just then, King Rayalu accompanied by Ramalinga, entered the court to witness the exhibition. Weavers repeated their standard phrases. Rayalu stared at the hands of the weavers for a moment and whispered to Ramalinga, "I regret to say, I cannot see any material in their hands. Is that my own sin or my parents'?" "Nothing comes to be visible in thin air, My Lord!" replied Ramalinga.

Rayalu grew suspicious, "What do you mean?" he asked. Ramalinga in a low tone audible only to the King said, "King of Kings! These weavers are cheating our eyes and brains with their deceptive speech."

Rayalu urged Ramalinga to make public, the cheating of the weavers. Ramalinga turned towards the gorgeous woman and in an astoundingly inquisitive tone told her, "What a beauty! How rich are these textiles, Lady. The King of Kings Rayalu is anxious to view your stepped up decorum, if you wear those celestial material."

The lady understood that Ramalinga deciphered the secret of invisible weaving. She was confused for a moment. She could neither disregard the King's order nor stand nude in the crowded court in the guise of wearing something, which actually was nothing. She thought that the only way out would be to fall on the King's feet pleading mercy. Immediately she did so begging for pardon. This was how Ramalinga was once again instrumental in protecting his King.

Since then, nudity is being referred as wearing divine clothes.

### [Tenali Ramalingam And the Two Thieves](#)

It was the practice of King Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu to visit the jails once a while and review the living standards of the convicted. During one of his visits, two of the jail inmates pleaded for cutting down their punishment period.

They explained that theft was one of the 64 arts in the epics and Vedas and started defining the art of stealing.

However, they argued that they would shed the lifestyle and shift for one or the other profession to eke out their living. Rayalu thought for a moment brushing his moustache royally.



**"It's alright thieves. First let me know about your expertise in the art and then decide. You both have to burgle at Ramalinga's house and return. If you emerge successful, then you will be set free immediately" Rayalu ordered them. "Hey you both listen. You should not deliver any physical blows to the households, take care" he added one condition.**

**The same night they were 'officially' let out for robbing Ramalinga's residence. Ramalinga was nurturing a beautiful backyard garden fondly. The thieves' duo crossed over the backyard compound wall and took shelter in the bean bushes to watch the surroundings first.**

**Ramalinga was not just another ordinary man in the crowd. He spotted the duo hiding in the bushes. He called his wife loudly, "My dear wife! Come here fast. The whole town is on fire with the news about some convicts jumping jail and are said to be at large well within the town. We should immediately protect all our jewellery and other valuables..." watching carefully around the bushes, increasing the pitch "...bring that bundle with all our gold and jewellery."**

**A minute later, Ramalinga and his wife with great effort brought a heavy bundle into the backyard and dropped it into the well. Dhhhhhhhhhhhabbbb....sppppplsh sounds of a heavy weight dropping into the water in the well echoed for few seconds. The thieves looked at each other with sparkles in their eyes.**

**They never thought it would be so easy to rob Ramalinga. Meanwhile, the couple went inside the house and closed the door. After sometime, snores were heard from the bedroom of the house. Slowly the thieves drew themselves out of the bushes, taking care they do not make any noise and went close to the well. While one of them stood guard, the other one slipped into the well. In a minute, the thief came out of the well and discussed with the other that there is much water in the well. The jewellery bundle cannot be taken out as it is. It would be better if some water was drawn out to snatch away the bundle, they decided.**

**Immediately they started drawing water from the well one after the other bucket. Water started flowing continuously in the backyard spreading all the ways. In the shade of trees and darkness, Ramalinga covering his head with a shawl took one farm tool and started guiding the water to the plants and trees in the yard. As it was too dark and the thieves were concentrating on drawing the water alone, they did not notice Ramalinga doing this.**

**After drawing water from the well for three to four hours continuously, the thieves were tired. One of them again went into the well and came back, "You, come I need help to bring the bundle out,**

it is too heavy.” Both of them slipped into the well together again. With great effort both of them brought the bundle out and fell on the ground like logs of woods after opening it.

To their dismay, it was not a bundle of jewellery but a bundle of small boulders and rocks. They never understood until then that Ramalinga hid his precious items somewhere in the house and dropped this into the well.

Ramalinga called them, “Hey dear thieves! Please draw few more buckets of water from the well. Only two of the plants are to be watered. Please hurry up it is close to dawn. Kindly help me quick and little more” like sprinkling chillies on the wounds of burglars.

Both of them were stunned on hearing Ramalinga’s voice. They told each other, “Run! It is Ramalinga!” and sped away crossing the wall with all the tired bodies.

The so-called argument of the thieves about the art of stealing and their expertise did not work on Ramalinga at least.

### [Ramalinga Dares to Criticise Rayalu's Composition](#)

Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu and his court Bhuvana Vijayam comprising Ashta Diggajas was taken as a model by many kings and kingdoms in and out of the Indian sub-continent. Rayalu was known for his fondness towards literature and his patronage towards poets and composers.

The Ashta Diggajas in Bhuvana Vijayam are Allasani Peddana, Nandi Thimmana, Dhurjati, Madayya Gari Mallana, Pingali Surana, Tenali Rama Krishnudu, Ayyala Raju Rama Bhadrudu and Rama Raja Bhushanudu.



Rayalu was compared to one of the greatest ever kings of the country King Bhoja, for his inclination towards developing literature and composition. Rayalu himself was a scholar in Sanskrit, Telugu (Andhra) and Kannada. Most famous among the Telugu compositions of Rayalu were Amuktha Malyada, and Vishnu Chitheeyamu. Both the compositions were based on God Vishnu’s devotees.

Life sketch of devotee Vishnu Chitha, Goda Devi's devotion and God's testing were the key elements. Goda Devi was a devotee of Lord Krishna right from her childhood. She adored Him and finally she marries Lord Krishna. The heartfelt expressions of Goda Devi about the Lord Krishna and her lifestyle were decoratively in Amuktha Malyada. Though Amuktha Malyada was written in Telugu, it was majorly filled with usages of Sanskrit language and was not generally understandable by the common people. However, the scholars and persons with proficiency in Sanskrit applauded the book. They appreciated the expression of feelings, narration style and presentations of grammar and usages.

A criticism was in circulation about Amuktha Malyada during those days. It was said that Allasani Peddana authored it and named to be written by Rayalu. Critics also cited a line from sonnets written in both Amuktha Malyada and Manu Charithram starting with "Neela Meghamu Daalu Deelu Cheyu Gajalu...".

Allasani Peddana wrote Manu Charitram, sometime later to Rayalu writing Amuktha Malyada. There was also a discussion that Allasani Peddana with high regards to King Rayalu took the sonnet and presented it as it was written in Amuktha Malyada. Anyway, the criticism and discussion for and against Amuktha Malyada went on for quite sometime.

One day, Rayalu during the literature discussion in Bhuvana Vijayam asked the present poets and experts to comment over Amuktha Malyada. No one knew what the King actually wished to hear from the gathering. Almost all the renowned poets and scholars did not dare comment either for or against the book of Rayalu, thinking not to lose the place and position in the Bhuvana Vijayam.

Waiting for some time, Ramalinga raised. In a single sentence he said that he carried no two feelings about the book.

He furthered, "My Lord! A right critic will never bother who the author was. The critic will always be concentrating about the subject, presentation, narration and standards of language. Any criticism should be based on the occasion. It is also to be recalled that for any matter there definitely will be both constructive and destructive criticism in the world."

Rayalu asked Ramalinga to first explain the lacunae in the book. Ramalinga commented there were one or two usages that were irrelevant to the context of the situation. Rayalu was irritated on listening this. "Ramakrishna! Don't you note the circumstances to wit on? I'm not convinced with your sarcastic comment. Refer to the text and pass the comment carefully quoting it," roared the King.

The whole court was silent and the King's tone echoed in. Ramalinga took out a copy of Amuktha Malyada and recited a stanza from the text,

"Aanishtha nidhi geha seema nadu reyalinchinan mroyunem,  
the nagendra sayananu punya kathalum divya prabandhanu sam,  
dhana dhyanamu naasthi sakaluhuthansthushna thanasthapu va,  
po nasthyo danaleshtavam chaknapaya bhokthavya mastalkulu"

"Referring to the last two lines of the above stanza I recited, I feel that it was like asking a guest to have lunch from a plate that is not served with any eatables. The situation is different here and this explains something different, which is irrelevant" said Ramalinga. All the members of the Bhuvana Vijayam looked at Ramalinga appreciating. Still, they were worried what would be the reaction of King Rayalu on this straight criticism on his book.

Rayalu reacted strange to the expectations of the courtiers. With his natural affection and inclination to constructive criticism and especially scholars, "Ramalinga! That was good to note your evaluation style. You are right. There definitely will be constructive and destructive criticisms on any material. I request all the members of the Bhuvana Vijayam to take Ramalinga as model and express their comments freely on any book or composition. There is no need to consider who is the author and what is his or her status."

The courtiers continued to shower their appreciations long even after the court was adjourned for the day.

This was the courage, cleverness and presence of mind Ramalinga had.

### [Ramalinga Humiliates Rama Raja Bhushana](#)

It was one of those finest days at Bhuvana Vijayam. King Rayalu along with his Ashta Diggajas was enjoying the literary discussion session that day.



Rama Raja Bhushana was known to be a romantic poet, authoring prose and poetry reciting women and their beauty. Rayalu asked Rama Raja Bhushana to frame a stanza on the beauty of women, extempore.

Rama Raja Bhushana rose from his seat and thought for a second or two and immediately composed,

**“Naanaa soona vithavai vaasanala naa ghraaenchu saarangame  
Laa nannolla datan chu gandha phalithabal, kakan bondiyo  
Shaa naasaa kruthii booni sarva sumassourabha samvasamai  
Poonen brekshana maalika madhukaree punjambui lirvankalakun”**

Rayalu was impressed about the way Rama Raja Bhushana described the beauty of woman instantly. Pleased over, Rayalu appreciated him and felicitated him with one thousand gold coins.

Ramalinga, as everyone knows is not for sitting quite on any happening. He sprung off his seat to say, “My Lord, Rama Raja Bhushana bought this poem from Nandi Thimmana for one thousand gold coins. It is surprising how come you know the exact price of the deal. It would not be profitable to him if you pay him exactly the same price at which he purchased...”

Hearing this the total gathering immersed in laughter. Rama Raja Bhushana had no way to counter Ramalinga, though he wished to, as the damage was already done. He could only manage sitting calm grinding his teeth on Ramalinga.

Some days later, one fine evening Rama Raja Bhushana along with his disciple was passing through the street in which Nandi Thimmana’s residence was located. A subject discussion was going on in Thimmana’s house during that time. Rama Raja Bhushana could locate Ramalinga from distance, participating in the discussions.

Loudly Rama Raja Bhushana told his disciple describing the session as,

**“Vaakila Kaavali Thimmana  
Vaakita Kavi Koti Maadhavakitakaade”**

The sarcastic poetry described that the session was like an assembly of pigs that gathered near the threshold of Nandi Thimmana.

Hearing this, Ramalinga picked up the tone in which Rama Raja Bhushana was speaking. Immediately he stopped the discussion and said,

**“Prakrutha, Sanskrutha, Ghaarjhura  
mookee krutha kukavi thunga mustha thathikin  
Vaakila Kaavali Thimmana  
Vaakita Kavi Koti Maadhavakitakaade”**

This meant that the discussion session would resemble similar to the gathering of pigs, for those who composes prose and poetry with a mixture of nonsense, brutal language, and irrelevant issues.

Rama Raja Bhushana taking the meaning immediately rushed off the place along with his disciple.

That was how Ramalinga humiliated Rama Raja Bhushana.

### [The Weird Wells' Wedding Invitation](#)

During the period when Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu was ruling the Vijaya Nagar Empire with Hampi as his capital, Mohammedan Sultans were ruling Delhi. The Sultans were powerful and were ruling many parts of Northern India. They were always attempting to invade on Hindu ruled kingdoms and grab them into their fold. For declaring war the Sultans used to find one or the other ploy.



The Delhi Sultan once got an idea to insult and instantly he sent a wedding invitation to Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu. Going through the contents of the invitation, the royal court Bhuvana Vijayam and the King Rayalu went speechless. The invitation read as:

### Wedding Invitation

We proposed to perform marriage to the newly dug Well in our kingdom

We have the pleasure of inviting all the wells in your kingdom to attend the ritual and their (the wells) presence is solicited.

Delhi

Sd/-

Date:XX/XX/XXXX

The Sultan of Delhi.

The tremor did not stop there. A warning letter was attached along with the invitation. The warning letter said that in case the King failed to send all the wells in the concerned kingdom, such action would be treated as an insult and will be liable to face the fury of the Delhi sultan.

Rayalu, on receiving the invitation along with the letter through a personal messenger from the Sultan of Delhi could not understand what to do about this invitation. This is because; everyone knew that sending wells from one place to another is practically above impossible. Rayalu was in total confusion what to do and what to reply. Thinking for sometime to find a solution to this problem, in vain, Rayalu forwarded the puzzling wedding invitation and warning letter to the Chief Minister Thimmarusu and sent a message to come out with a viable solution.

Thimmarusu found the invitation to be too strange and the problem like a complex puzzle. What an invitation? Thimmarusu thought, inviting wells of Vijaya Nagar Empire to the wedding of a well at Delhi! Even Thimmarusu could not draw out any thought close to solution that can be effective in avoiding any rift between the two kingdoms.

Thimmarusu approached King Rayalu and expressed his inability to draw out any solution. Rayalu was much more tensed on hearing his Chief Minister. Then, Thimmarusu convinced Rayalu that there was no need to get so much worried, as there is a man in the service of the King, who can draw a best amicable equation. Rayalu asked about the person Thimmarusu was referring to. Immediately, Thimmarusu told the King that it was none other than poet Ramalinga.

Taking the King's permission, Thimmarusu headed to Ramalinga's residence and explained the whole sequence along with the worries of the King Rayalu. Ramalinga in a cool fashion studied the invitation and the warning letter. He told Thimmarusu, "Dear Chief Minister

**Thimmarusu! The Delhi Sultan must be attempting to humiliate the Hindu rituals and customs. You know Hindus have a ritual of performing enlivening (Prathistha) to the newly dug wells. A wonderful thought must have struck the Sultan's mind to perform marriage to the well instead of prathistha to the well."**

**He continued thinking for a moment, "There is no problem either with the invitation or the warning letter. There is nothing to worry. You go home peacefully and relax." Ramalinga assured Thimmarusu, "I will give out the best solution to this problem in the Bhuvana Vijayam tomorrow."**

**As usual, the Bhuvana Vijayam started its session the next morning, but there was no charm or shine in anyone's face including the King Rayalu. All of them were worried about the solution to the Delhi Sultan's created problem. Amid the gloomy atmosphere, Ramalinga rose from his seat and started reading a reply prepared by him on behalf of King Rayalu to Delhi Sultan,**

**"To His Excellency, the Sultan of Delhi...**

**We acknowledge your invitation inviting our wells for the wedding of a well in your kingdom. We are glad and grateful that you remembered us for the memorable occasion. On receiving your invitation, we immediately read the message to all the wells in our Kingdom. Those wells are resenting your wells, as they did not attend their (wells in Vijaya Nagar Empire) wedding.**

**Hence, we keep you informed that if your wells personally come to Vijaya Nagar and invite, our wells will definitely oblige the invitation. Therefore, you are requested to send your wells here to invite our wells personally to the wedding ritual. Once your wells come here, our wells and we together will come to Delhi for the wedding.**

**Hoping to welcome your wells at the earliest,**

**Vijaya Nagaram (Hampi)  
Date:XX/XX/XXXX**

**Yours' sincerely,  
Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu,  
"Vijaya Nagar Ruler"**

**The total gathering of the Bhuvana Vijayam cheered at once on hearing the reply intellectually composed by Ramalinga and appreciated him.**

**This reply was sent to Delhi Sultan with a personal messenger. Sultan of Delhi was shocked with the reply received and questioned the messenger, "how can we send the wells with you?" Receiving no**

reply from the messenger, without any second thought Sultan dropped the proposals of humiliating Hindu rituals along with the thought of waging war unnecessarily on Hindu ruled kingdoms.

Moreover, the Sultan appreciating the intelligence and wit King Rayalu had in replying his invitation and warning, sent many gifts and Farmans with the messenger to Rayalu.

### [How an Elephants' fleet junks in a mosquito's throat?](#)

Among the Ashta Diggajas in the Bhuvana Vijayam of Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu, the King for his ingenuity, quick wittedness, and fast filling of stanzas when at test particularly favoured Ramalinga. Rayalu was renowned as Andhra Bhoja and Poets' Paradise. With his inherent qualities of wit and sarcasm, Ramalinga was growing big and closer to Rayalu day after day.



With no change in the rule, the more you grow the more envious you become, the other courtiers like Rama Raja Bhushana were against the growth of Ramalinga's association with the King Rayalu. Whenever there is a possibility, those courtiers, and Rama Raja Bhushana had been working out for damaging Ramalinga's image and sling mud on him before the King. Ramalinga efficiently countered these efforts and trials of courtiers all the time.

At one stage, as these personalities were unable to compete with Ramalinga in wit and ingenuity decided to humiliate Ramalinga. They handed over the responsibility of insulting Ramalinga to the main entrance guards. Those poor soldiers were lured by the bribe amount courtiers had offered them. A line was given to those guards for stopping Ramalinga at the entrance itself. The line was "Kunjara Yudhambu Doma Kuthuka Jochen" meaning an elephants' fleet is stuck in a mosquito's throat.

Ramalinga as usual was walking into the Bhuvana Vijayam premises and the guards stopped him. He questioned why were they blocking the way. The soldiers told Ramalinga about the line and asked him to enter the premises only after reciting the first three lines for the last line they recited to him. Ramalinga boiled and trembled with anger on those soldiers. Immediately he understood what and who was behind the soldiers. With harsh words he completed reciting,

**“Ganjayi Thravi Thurakala  
Sanjathamu Goodi Kallu Chavi Gonnava?  
Lanjala Kodaka! Yekkadara!  
Kunjara Yudhambu Doma Kuthuka Jochen.”**

Long before those guards could understand the meaning of the poem, Ramalinga walked stiff into the main court hall.

After sometime, while the King Rayalu was into one of the pleasure rounds of literary discussions, the guards entered the hall and complained that Ramalinga disgraced them with the poem at the main entrance. After listening to all the details narrated by the guards, Rayalu ordered Ramalinga to extempore compose a poem taking the same end line with a situation in Mahabharatha.

Ramalinga raised from his seat and after salutations to the King Rayalu recited,

**“Ranja Chedi Pandavulari  
Bhanjanulai Viratu Golva Palapadirakata!  
Sanjaya! Vidhinemandunu  
Kunjara Yudhambu Doma Kuthuka Jochen!”**

Pandavas in Mahabharatha are like a fleet of powerful elephants. Losing in the gamble with Kauravas, they had to live incognito for some time. During this period they served a weak ruler Virata. By all Gods! It is the fate of those Pandavas to serve such a weak person in spite of being renowned warriors. This is similar to a fleet of strong elephants being stuck in the throat of a small mosquito.

Rayalu clapped in all praise of Ramalinga for his ingenuity and wit filled narration. In the full house, Rayalu hugged Ramalinga and appreciated him agreeing that Ramalinga’s words are like double-edged swords. This state of affairs brought Ramalinga more close to Rayalu.

All the attempts to trap Ramalinga and cut down his image before the King Rayalu by the envied courtiers and poet Rama Raja Bhushana blew off like a piece of raw cotton in Ramalinga’s intelligence whirlwind.

## Ramalinaga and Ramayana Recital

Vikrama Simhapuri (presently Nellore town) was part of Vijaya Nagar Empire under the rule of Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu. This place was famous for wicked and cunning women. These women with their uncommon intelligence added to their beauty and appeal used to defeat scholars and experts to transform as their domestic slaves and servants.



A prostitute Kanchana Mala among them was too notorious in this regard. In the name of satisfying Ramayana recital, she framed twisty and wicked rules, which made all the competitors lose in their 'battle' against the woman. The lady's "reputation" along with her condition filled Ramayana recital issue spread all over the region and no one was dared to step into her house to compete with her. In case any one ventured, lured by the stunning beauty of Kanchana Mala they too were definite to lose and become either a slave or a servant to her.

One day, Ramalinga visited Vikrama Simhapuri on his personal accomplishments. Completing his job, he sat with some scholars, reputed persons of the locality, and enquired about the happenings and specialities of the town. The gathering in a synchronised tone explained Ramalinga about Kanchana Mala and her urge for satisfactory recital of Ramayana epic. One of the associates there said that, "it was her celestial beauty and the quantity of reward that was driving scholars to her, who are finally seen serving her losing the competition."

One of the senior and aged poet of the region told Tenali Ramalinga cursing her, "she is not at all a woman, and she is wicked of the wicked. It is you, the right person, to defeat and smash her proudness."

He continued, "You should teach her a right lesson and release all the scholars suffering in her service."

Ramalinga thought, 'Oh! Kanchana Mala is that highly impious.' He said to the persons around him, "That being the case, I should definitely compete with her...by the way...what is the test she is winning on?" he questioned. One of them explained that she demands the competitor to recite Ramayana and satisfy her. Every

time she says the recital was not satisfactory and orders the competitor to become her slave." "Poor fellows, what they can do? The condition of the test was to take out a word 'satisfied' from her after the performance."

"Enough! It is alright!" Ramalinga told all of them, "She just needs to be satisfied with a Ramayana concert, I will do it. One of you keep her informed about my willingness to satisfy her" Ramalinga said and headed towards his accommodation. Not one, but all of them got up to inform Kanchana Mala about Ramalinga's compliance to recite Ramayana at her residence thinking, 'Yes! Now the time has come for breaking her.'

Ramalinga, in the evening attired in a disguise went to Kanchana Mala's residence. "Welcome! Hearty Welcome! O learned man, Welcome" Kanchana Mala invited him.

He told Mala, "I have come to recite Ramayana as if it is happening in front of your eyes."

"That was good. Then, are you aware of the reward and punishments?" Mala questioned.

"I am aware of those Kanchana Mala! I have a request..." paused Ramalinga. "Please tell me Sir" Mala immediately responded, "Before I complete the total recital you should not say anything. You should do what ever I say as part of the presentation. After I complete the narration you can reward me if you are 'satisfied' or punish otherwise" Ramalinga sarcastically stated. She agreed to it and the story began.

Ramalinga started with the birth of Rama, Lakshmana, Bharatha, and Sathrughna. It continued with Rama Lakshmana accompanying with Sage Vishwamithra to protect the celestial sacrifice, killing Thataka, releasing Ahalya from curse, Rama's marriage with Seetha breaking Lord Shiva's bow, and Rama's migration to forests along with Seetha and Lakshmana on stepmother Kaika's wish.

Ramalinga was narrating the episodes with an excellent expression and mannerism in a right modulation. Nowhere, Kanchana Mala looked to be satisfied as she was commenting 'You are not satisfying me.' He advanced with the story narration about Ravana's kidnapping Seetha, Rama killing Vali, deploying Hanuman to Lanka with the assistance of Sugreeva. Again Mala screamed, "I am not satisfied with your performance."

Controlling himself from exploding with anger, Ramalinga convinced her "Kanchana Mala! You are telling me that you are not satisfied

with my performance. However, this would be the best of performance on earth. OK. Let us leave that. Now get ready, you will witness Ramayana happening in front of you."

"Hehehehe...yeah please continue, I am in fact waiting for that," she said.

Ramalinga jumped on to her selectively decorated cot and said, "This is how Hanuman jumped on to the Peak of Mahendra Mountain." Standing erect on the bed he took another flight and landed on another cot, "Like this Hanuma jumped on to another mountain's peak." From there he jumped close to Kanchana Mala and started throwing powerful fists on her back, "this was how Hanuman hit Lankini, who blocked his way from entering Lanka."

Mala started shouting to the top of her voice, "Oh God! Mother! This man is killing me." Ramalinga in a commanding tone, "I told you not to hinder me in the middle. Now shut your mouth, Listen completely..." jumping like an ape, Ramalinga took out a lighted wisp hanging from the wall. "Hanuman returning from the Ashoka garden after visiting Seetha started torching Lanka and its men like this..." he gave fire to Mala's clothes and ignited almost all the clothes and inflammables in the house. While Mala was attempting to extinguish fire on her clothes, Ramalinga repeated beating her all over stating that was how Hanuman thumped the demons in Lanka. Mala other than shouting loudly and protecting her from the fire could not do anything.

Few seconds later, after lighting all the household material, Ramalinga coolly went to the backyard stood near the well, "this is how Hanuman put out the fire set to his tail by the demons" and started taking bath drawing water from the well.

Looking at the house in fire, Kanchana Mala went astray and ran out of the house like a mad woman. Ramalinga's sarcastic comments irked her further more, "Who else can narrate Ramayana so lively Kanchana Mala, did you enjoy that?"

Cursing, yelling, screaming Kanchana Mala said, "fraud, cheat, he said he will recite Ramayana for me and set the house on fire." With disturbed clothes and hair, she ran to the local Court of Law and approached the judge. She sought justice from the judge explaining the whole episode. Meanwhile, Ramalinga reached there without any tension appearing on his face.

The Judge questioned Ramalinga, "What is your answer to her allegations?" Ramalinga folded hands at the Judge and appealed, "Your Majesty! I do not bear any fault with me. It was she, who

wished to witness a lively Ramayana recital to her 'satisfaction'." Describing all the past and present deeds of Kanchana Mala, Ramalinga said, "Mr Justice! I believe I am not at fault. In case the honourable court finds any, I am ready to take the punishment."

The Judge understood that it was the wicked and proud nature of Kanchana Mala, which brought her to this turn of life. He scolded her for cheating and humiliating scholars and learned persons in the name of Ramayana recital and rewards. The judgement made it clear that Ramalinga did not have any fault to punish and freed him. In addition to this, the verdict released all the learned men who were serving her as servants and slaves. Ramalinga received all the appreciations from the people of the town.

### [Ramalinga Wins the War Before Drawing Swords!](#)

Rama Sastry was a renowned scholar in reasoning, logic, and grammar. A wish lied in his heart to compete with Ashta Diggajas in Bhuvana Vijayam of Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu. The wish strengthened with the passage of time. With the desire in him, he appeared before the King Rayalu, one day when he was in his usual literary sessions with the eight jewels of his court.



"Hey King of Kings," Rama Sastry presented salutations to Rayalu, "You are the beacon of the Vijaya Nagar Empire! With your pleasant looks poetry, literature and composition are flourishing in this region. I bow to you with all respects." Sastry continued, "The hear and say about the Ashta Diggajas in your Bhuvana Vijayam, their command over various divisions of literature. They all are reputed and their names are uttered with respect in the scholars and learned circles. I seek your kind permission to question them and know about their efficiency in their concerned arenas."

King Rayalu on listening to the humble request of the visiting intellectual, "Dear learned person! I too carry a thought to know the standards and excellence of our Ashta Diggajas. I would be happy if that wish is accomplished through you Rama Sastry. You attend the court tomorrow and let there be a professional competition." Rayalu ordered his courtiers to arrange a guest accommodation to the visitor.

Satisfied Rama Sastry presenting salutations to the king again and left Bhuvana Vijayam.

The next day, Rama Sastry presented himself in the court with all preparation. Allasani Peddana, Nandi Thimmana, Rama Raja Bhushanudu, Madaya Gari Mallana, Dhoorjati, Ayyala Raju Rama Bhadrudu, Bhattu Murthy, and Tenali Ramakrishna besides full house attendance to watch the competition fill the Bhuvana Vijayam. All the seven among the Ashta Diggajas were tensed with the reputation they heard about Rama Sastry about his command and expertise in logic, reasoning, and grammar. Sastry's name is taken with scare and respect, as he defeated those personalities who were graded to be aces in that division of literature. All the seven were nervous thinking whether there is a possibility of winning the visiting scholar or not.

While Sastry was sitting in all comfort, confidence and the seven of the Ashta Diggajas were worried; Tenali Ramalinga was seated in all ease and pleasant. Ramalinga after salutations to the King Rayalu and taking his permission started speaking, "Mr Rama Sastry! Are you good in poetry." Rama Sastry thinking that as an insult to him was about to enrage on Ramalinga. However, recollecting that he is present in the royal court of King Rayalu stopped himself from doing so.

Gazing Ramalinga top to bottom sarcastically said, "Do you think that I am no good at that stupid...verses? Do you consider even that a scholarship?"

Instantly replied Ramalinga, "That was good to know Mr Rama Sastry that you are good in stupid poetry. We understood that very well with your words. So nice of you." Sastry questioned, "Ramalinga, are there two categories as stupid poetry and bright poetry?"

"That was your statement, Rama Sastry!" Ramalinga bounced back, "you asked me whether I think you are no good in stupid verses. That's all right. Let us keep that aside for now, I request you to keep us informed what are you scholar in?"

"I am reputed for my scholarship in logic and grammar. On both the subjects I have excellent command," replied Rama Sastry.

Ramalinga innocently said, "Mr Sastry! For quite some time, I have a doubt in a grammar sequence. Can you clarify, if I ask you that?"

"Sure!" Sastry answered with all pride and proud filled tone, "you don't have to hesitate any more."

**"What is the grammatical rule and theory to be followed for a word, 'Thriyambaka'" Ramalinga furnished his suspicion.**

**Rama Sastry moved his body as if he was in laughter within. Later, he said that "is that a doubt? Don't you know even that? Thri + Ambaka= Thriyambaka. This is known as Dwigu Samasam (A theoretical regulation in Telugu (Andhra) Grammar for combining two meaningful words into one.) God! How is that you are placed so high without knowing such a common basic, strange!" commented Sastry.**

**"Hey! Is that all?" Ramalinga was ready for another bout of sarcasm, "If this is what you know, and can define then your scholarship is like a dead wood."**

**When the two were about to get into the actual and real round of debate and discussion, King Rayalu stopped them and adjourned the competitive session for the next day, as he was to take care of administrative and other affairs.**

**News spread in the city like wildfire that Ramalinga and Rama Sastry are about to have a literary war in the Bhuvana Vijayam, the next day enthusiasts, scholars, poets, composers and others flooded into the galleries of the court.**

**When almost all the distinguished personalities of Bhuvana Vijayam including the visitor Rama Sastry, King Rayalu entered the court and occupied the royal throne. All those present in the court saluted the King and took their respective seats. Ramalinga was not seen, and noticing this Rama Sastry grinned within. Sastry thought Ramalinga was scared and was not present. Just then, Ramalinga carrying something fastened in a nice cloth entered in a hurry and sat after saluting the King and the court.**

**Those present in the galleries whispered among them looking at Ramalinga surprisingly. After the King waved for continuation of the debate and discussion, Rama Sastry questioned, "Ramalinga can I know what is the title of the book you carried in?" Ramalinga not hesitating a moment replied, "This is king of standard books titled, 'Thilakashta Mahisha Bandhanam'." Rama Sastry puzzled on hearing such title, curiously he leaned forward and repeated, "What? Thilakashta Mahisha Bandhanam?"**

**"Yes! Mr Rama Sastry!" Ramalinga said, "Thilakashta Mahisha Bandhanam! Haven't you read this book earlier? Presuming that this standard book would be helpful for our debate and discussion, I brought this along."**

Rama Sastry could not figure out what to do. First, he never knew that such books of standards existed, secondly, Ramalinga brought that along with him. 'What to do if he countered my argument and presented one or the other citations from the book in support of his counter-argument? I will be closed and my skills and expertise, command would never be respected again.' Rama Sastry thought for a while and decided to do something. Turning towards the King Rayalu he said, "My Lord! Ramalinga brought Thilakashta Mahisha Bandhanam with him to standardise his argument and counter-argument in the session. That being the case, I should also bring some standard books to support my logic and reasoning. If the King kindly grant me permission to bring those from my guest accommodation, I would return immediately..."

King Rayalu acceded his plea and consented, "It's alright, proceed." Rama Sastry threw himself out of the court like a whirlwind.

Time was passing by and Rama Sastry did not return. Rayalu was compelled to postpone the session for the next day, as the session cannot continue without the competitor's presence.

The next morning, again the court was waiting for Rama Sastry. He never appeared. King Rayalu ordered his soldiers to verify and inform the court about the disappearance of Rama Sastry. Soldiers returned like a ball hit to the wall and explained that Rama Sastry in the dark of the night went away with his luggage. Probably this could be the result of the realisation that, he is definite to lose in the debate and discussion. From protecting himself from the humiliation, Rama Sastry should have left not informing anyone.

The total presence in the Bhuvana Vijayam including King Rayalu could not stop getting into laughter. Looking appraisingly at Ramalinga, Rayalu said it was an excellent performance.

"Ramalinga!" Rayalu asked, "Recite to the court some good contents of the book you brought along, Thilakashta Mahisha Bandhanam, to the court."

"Hahahahah...Hahhahaha..." Ramalinga said, "with all due respects to the King, is that you also mistook this bundle to be a book? Look at this..." and opened the bundle. Again there was hilarity in the court, as it was a book, it was a tender Sesamum plant tied with reign rope for buffalos. Both were fastened in a nice cloth. Looking at the contents of the bundle, there was amusement for the courtiers and onlookers.

Ramalinga explained, "Thilakashta means a Sesamum plant and Mahisha Bandhanam, a rope used for tying a buffalo, both put

together, Thilakashta Mahisha Bandhanam. That is it all. No standards and no books. Rama Sastry fell into dilemma on hearing this name, he did not try to take the title and think. In all confusion, he fled the city."

King Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu appreciated the intellect of Ramalinga and felicitated him for protecting the reputation of Bhuvana Vijayam. That was how, Ramalinga won the battle long before drawing any sword!

### [Ramalinga Attempts to Turn a Dog Into a Cow!!!](#)

The first rays of Sun were spreading on the world driving away all the evil and darkness from. Just then King Rayalu woke from deep sleep. Yawning he came out of his palace room and clapped calling, "who is there?" Running came a soldier, "Yes My Lord!" bowing his head to the King.



"Go right away and bring the barber along" ordered Rayalu. Taking the instruction, soldier left saluting the King. Rayalu re-entered his room and just rested in the easy chair in there. Immediately he went into sound sleep again. The barber rushed in on hearing the call of King Rayalu. Eventually, he slowly entered the room of the king to find Rayalu sleeping in the armchair. Sensing the King to be too tired the barber never wanted to wake him up. Putting all his experience and expertise, barber completed his job shaving the beard and cutting hair. Finishing his work barber left the place in all silence.

After sometime, Rayalu opened his eyes. He did not find the barber waiting by the door. Angrily he clapped for the attendant and shouted at him to bring the barber in a moment. Slowly he got off the armchair and casually put his hand on the chin, Surprise! It was like a freshly done. Rayalu grew suspicious and walked in front of the mirror and looked at his image in there. The hair was cleanly cut and beard was neatly shaved.

Meanwhile the attendant brought the barber before him. Rayalu was impressed about the barber's job and appreciated him, "You Barber! I am satisfied for your job. I wish to bestow a boon, go on ask one I will accomplish."

**"Master!..." hesitantly barber presented his good old desire, "Since long, My Lord...I carry a wish to become a Brahmin. Kindly bless me with this, I do not need any thing, as my family and me do not have anything short with the your Lord's mercy."**

**Rayalu was stunned to know barber's desire. However, he assured, "This is not any big boon, tomorrow itself your wish will be fulfilled." He waved the barber to leave, and summoned for some Brahmins.**

**"Dear Brahmins! I promised the barber to transform him as a Brahmin. You should do it with all your knowledge and keep my word. All of you will be rewarded suitably," Rayalu ordered. On hearing the sound of 'rewarded' Brahmins were lured and told the king, "As you wish My Lord! We will transform the barber into a Brahmin."**

**The news of barber turning a Brahmin spread in the city and all the Brahmin community whimpered silently, because if they speak louder the King might know of it and they would face punishment. They thought, 'it is not fair for the King Rayalu to order so for transforming the barber into a Brahmin. This might give way for many others to long for the wish...this is against Dharma.'**

**Thinking long in vain what to do, they approached Tenali Ramalinga seeking a solution. Understanding the whole episode, Ramalinga tried to inject some confidence into the members of the Brahmin community. He told them, "All of you have some peace and rest. I will try my best to avert this extreme incident from happening."**

**The next morning, the Brahmins who were ordered on to the job took the barber to the Coast of Suvarna Mukhi River and started chanting some hymns standing around him. King Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu was watching the performance sitting at a distance and was supervising what was happening.**

**At the same time, a little far from this place,**

**Ramalinga was chanting something or the other standing by the side of a black dog. He was pretending to ignore what was taking place near the place. While the Brahmins continued chanting the hymns, Rayalu slowly walked close to Ramalinga and asked, "Ramalinga! What are you doing to the dog?" With all natural submission Ramalinga told, "I am transforming this black dog into a white cow."**

**Rayalu laughing sarcastically, "Ramakrishna...hahahah...hahahaha...how can this black dog, perhaps, any dog turn into a white cow if you chant some hymns after giving it a dip in the holy river?"**

Innocently Ramalinga said, "King of Kings! Kindly forgive me for my foolishness. But, why can't this black dog be turned into a white cow, when a barber is being transformed into a Brahmin?"

King Rayalu stopped laughing and started to think. He understood that Ramalinga was doing this to open his eyes. Immediately he called the barber and told him, "Hey You barber, it is not possible to turn you as a Brahmin. Leaving this desire ask for another one."

The barber submissively saluted, "Master! I am happy with your kindness, I do not need anything" and left for home. Rayalu as usual, felicitated Ramalinga for opening his eyes and protecting from doing things against the Dharma.

### [Ramalinga's Prostrate Adoration to "Donkeys"](#)

Thathacharya was the royal teacher to the King Sri Krishna Deva Rayalu. He was a Vaishnavite (Vaishnavites believe Sri Maha Vishnu as the Supreme God) by practice and was having a defiant opinion and behaviour towards the Smarthas (Smarthas follow the tradition instituted by Sri Adi Sankaracharya).



While moving out, he used to cover his head and face with his upper garment (cloak) to avoid seeing Smarthas in the town. People watching Thathacharya doing this time and again titled him unofficially as 'stupid ritualist'. The learned category of Smarthas and other practices were finding ways to teach a lesson to Thathacharya.

They could not decide upon how and when to make tit for tat. The scare spread among them was that Thathacharya is the royal teacher to the King Rayalu and his family. If something goes wrong and kindles fury in the King, who should face it? With all these thoughts, they started searching who is efficient to do this job for them. Their search ended after touring and scanning through all the faces in the kingdom. That face belonged to Ramalinga. In a group all the learned people went to Ramalinga's residence to see him.

Ramalinga was little surprised to see all of them together at his threshold. Clipping some smiles on his lips, Ramalinga invited them folding hands to the scholars' battalion,

"Welcome to you all the learned personalities of the capital city. Welcome. It is my pleasure to see you all together."

Dhurjhati took the initiative to explain the problem that was boggling their minds,

"Ramalinga! We are all here to discuss a problem with you seeking a solution. The royal teacher Thathacharya is behaving beyond limits and is humiliating the Smarthas regularly. This might end up elsewhere, if he is not taught a right lesson. We all strongly believe that you are the right man who can do it in a sensible way. Please do not dishearten us. You should take this matter up."

Rama Raja Bhushana seconded supporting Dhurjhati,

"Dhurjhati was right Ramalinga. You should plunge into action for a right solution to this problem."

Ramalinga thought for a while, when all the other members of the group were coming out with one or the other statement against Thathacharya.

"Dear friends..." Ramalinga assured them, "All of you had put a heavy and burdensome job on my shoulders...Let me see what can I do about this. This is all the blessings of the Goddess Kali. You don't worry; I will take care of Thathacharya and his Vaishnavite proudness."

Though Ramalinga personally watched Thathacharya's misbehaviour towards Smarthas, he could not do anything. 'Now, the time has come. Nevertheless, how to go about this? What would happen if King Rayalu is irked on taking Thathacharya to task?' Ramalinga was waiting for the time tuning.

While all this was going on, King Rayalu learnt about the indecent mannerism of Thathacharya. He was hurt with the behaviour of Thathacharya and thought that if this continued, it might give way to communal differences in the kingdom. Thinking so, Rayalu summoned Ramalinga to his private chamber in the palace.

Ramalinga was present before the King as quickly as possible after hearing the call.

**“Ramalinga!” King Rayalu said in a low tone, “I wish to discuss an important issue with you.”**

**“Yes My Lord, as you Please!” Ramalinga replied.**

**“This is a matter that should be handled completely undercover. I thought you are efficient to handle this matter. I am assigning this job to you. Are you ready?” Rayalu questioned.**

**“Yes my king, every word of yours is an order for me.”**

**“It came to my knowledge that the royal teacher Thathacharya is humiliating Smarthas. I also noted that people are disgusted with him for this, in fact some of the courtiers also pleaded me to handle him and stop him from doing so. He is my family master and an elderly person. What and how should I tell him to correct his deeds? Now, it is up to you. Think wise and do something to check him from continuing with this” Rayalu ordered Ramalinga.**

**Ramalinga promised the King, “My Lord! I will do my best to solve the problem and bring some change in the ideology of Thathacharya about Smarthas.”**

**Leaving the palace, Ramalinga was overwhelmed with joy. He was waiting for a right opportunity and it has come through his way in the form of King’s order. The next morning Ramalinga went to see Thathacharya. No sooner Ramalinga approached the main gate, he could see Thathacharya coming out of the house. While approaching the gate, Thathacharya watching Ramalinga standing there took his upper garment and started covering his face. Ramalinga immediately said in a loud tone,**

**“Hey Master! I am the beloved disciple for you. Why is that you are covering your face on seeing me?”**

**“Ramalinga!” Thathacharya replied, “I will tell you a secret, just because you are my beloved disciple. Smartha culture is a sin filled one. Anyone who sees a Smarthite will be born as a Donkey in his or her next birth. That is why I protect myself by covering my face from attracting the sin of seeing a Smarthite. Keep this to yourself and don’t reveal anywhere.”**

**Ramalinga was more humble then, “My dear master! You know me. If I hear something, that totally remains within me. That will not come out even after my death. You don’t have to worry about this. Now, if you permit me I will take leave” “Go ahead”, Thathacharya sent him off.**

On way home, Ramalinga was almost jumping with joy. All these days he was breaking his head to find ways to teach a lesson. That was a fine day, because Thathacharya himself guided for an excellent way.

Ten days passed off. Coolly, with Ramalinga waiting for an opportunity. On the eleventh day, King Rayalu along with Thathacharya, Ashta Diggajas and other scholars visited a garden on the outskirts of the city as part of his relaxing routines. The day was spent off in a pleasurable manner.

While all of them were returning a herd of donkeys were seen coming in the opposite direction. Immediately, Ramalinga ran from behind the King and started paying prostrate homage to the donkeys falling on the ground before the herd.

King Rayalu was completely surprised with his behaviour. He shouted, "Ramalinga have you gone mad? Why are you saluting those donkeys?"

"My Lord! Kindly pardon me. I did not go mad or crazy. This donkey is Thathacharya's brother-in-law. That one his grandfather, that stout one is his maternal uncle and the one with those spots is Thathacharya's father."

Ramalinga continued, "I am blessed to see all these persons reborn as donkeys. There are here in this form for the sin of looking at Smarthas in their previous birth. I am pleased to see all of them together. Please My King do not mistake me. I am not lying. You can confirm this with the respected royal teacher Thathacharya. He does practice to cover his face to protect himself from the sin of seeing Smarthas."

King Rayalu looked at Thathacharya, who already had hung his chin down in shame. Since then, Thathacharya stopped both humiliating the Smarthas and covering his face on looking at people, belonging to other traditions and cultures. The King felicitated with a great gift to Ramalinga in his private chamber for treating the royal master with a right lesson.

## Thathacharya – Demon Chanting Hymns

Tenali Ramalinga clearly understood that Thathacharya was furious on him. He is just a court poet, while Thathacharya is the royal family teacher and priest. If Ramalinga tried to confront directly with Thathacharya, that might ruin him similar to the situation, a lamb smashing her head when it collided with a mountain to knock it down.

Analysing all the situations in detail and taking comparison of the strengths, Ramalinga decided to encounter Thathacharya with intelligence and not directly waging a war in the open.



Since then, Ramalinga started enquiring about the weaknesses of Thathacharya. In this process, one day Ramalinga managed to speak in isolation with Thathacharya's night watchman Bhadrudu. Carrying a small package in hand, Ramalinga addressed him, "Hey you, Bhadrudu! If you can give me a small information, all the 100 Varahas in this package will be yours."

Bhadrudu's eyes sparkled on hearing '100 Varahas'. It was equal to his two months salary and instantly he started calculating about what he could do with that sum. Ramalinga intercepted his thinking, "What are you thinking?"

"Nothing Sir! What should I reveal to you?" he asked in a humble tone. Bhadrudu carefully caught the package thrown at him while Ramalinga asked him, "Nothing very important. Tell me what is the schedule of our master Thathacharya after dusk, that's all."

Bhadrudu did not smell anything wrong about Ramalinga enquiring about Thathacharya and immediately replied, "There is no daily night routine for the Master Sir. However, twice a week, he goes towards the East Street after its dark and returns in the early hours. Ah! By the way, this night he will go on his way to the East Street."

"That's alright Bhadrudu! Keep this matter within you, as a secret," stating this Ramalinga left the place briskly.

That night Ramalinga reached the East Street before Thathacharya passed through and stood under the shade of a big tree by the side of the street. After waiting for sometime, he could spot Thathacharya

walking into the street from a distance. Ramalinga started shadowing him in the darkness until he walked into the house of a sex worker. Reaching close, Ramalinga could hear the door being locked from inside in the silence of the night. This was what I am waiting for, Ramalinga said to himself and sat in front of the house.

While Ramalinga was waiting, Thathacharya came out of the prostitute's house just before the dawn when it was still little dark. Immediately, Ramalinga rushed and stood before him. "Good Morning! Master Thathacharya! I now understood the saying 'Demons chanting hymns'. I will make your secret to everyone and expose your real nature," he threatened Thathacharya.

Thathacharya started shivering on hearing Ramalinga. It would be the end of respect if he exposed this matter before the elite class, he should be persuaded not to do so. Thathacharya thinking so said, "My Dear Ramalinga! You are my dearest of the disciples. Please do not remember this after we leave this place. I will do good to you. I will give you whatever you wish for."

Jumping with joy within himself, Ramalinga thought that was the time to take revenge out of him. "Dear master! I have a wish to sit on your shoulders for a distance, since long. Please carry me on your shoulders for a distance and I will forget about all this," Ramalinga announced.

'If I don't do what he says, I should lose hopes on retaining the reputation. Then, it will be like swimming all the seven seas and dying in the pothole in the backyard. I am little blessed, it is still dark, I cannot be so easily spotted by people if I carry him now itself." So went on Thathacharya's thinking and making Ramalinga sit on his shoulders started walking down the street and was passing through a street close to King Rayalu's bedroom in the palace.

Exactly during that time King Rayalu woke up early and was strolling in the balcony. In the loosening darkness, the King identified Thathacharya carrying someone on his shoulder. Immediately he called his gatemmen and ordered them, "you fellows! Look at the man carrying another man down there on the street. Bring the person sitting on the shoulders of the carrying man kicking and hitting him from there, to me." Immediately, the soldiers sprung into action. The always alert and wise Ramalinga understood the situation and got off the shoulders. "Master Thathacharya! Kindly pardon me. I am a sinner by riding your shoulders, a learned man. Now, let me be relieved of at least part of the sin by carrying you on my shoulders." Somehow, though Thathacharya was hesitant, Ramalinga managed to convince, shouldered Thathacharya, and started walking.

Hardly walking a few yards, the soldiers appeared before them and threw Thathacharya on the ground from Ramalinga's shoulders. From there, they started dragging him to the King's presence kicking and hitting him mercilessly. Ramalinga with a great effort managed to stop his joy flowing from inside, said to the soldiers, "What are you doing soldiers? Whom do you think you are beating up? He is Royal Family teacher Thathacharya. It is not fair for you to do so with him. You leave him, hear my words..."

The soldiers replied Ramalinga with a rough tone, "Go on! Go your way! Get away from here. We are doing this on the King's orders" and pulled Thathacharya to the presence of the King.

Rayalu was furious on noticing Thathacharya being booted by the soldiers. "You Stupids! What did I tell you and what are you doing? You all should be beheaded for humiliating revered Thathacharya."

Shivering soldiers bowed to the King and pleaded, "Oh My Lord! It was not our mistake, when we entered the street taking your order; Thathacharya was on the shoulders of poet Ramalinga and we following your orders dragged him here. That is it all. You can confirm this with Master Thathacharya before beheading us."

Thathacharya was in a big soup. If the whole story was narrated, it again links with the night haul. If that comes out, it is the beginning of the end. With great pain Thathacharya told, "My Dear King! They were right Ramalinga was carrying me on his shoulders."

Rayalu regretted for the happening and asked the soldiers leave the place without punishing them. Later, he got Thathacharya treated for the wounds he suffered on taking the beating of the soldiers.

Ramalinga crookedly was in all laughter the whole day for giving Thathacharya a right lesson.