Twitter Thread by Khatvaanga



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Sri Gurubhyo Namah.
Some tweets on Adi Shankaracharya and in particular the Guru Parampara of @sringerimath. [I had done this series earlier 5 years ago on account of Shishya Sweekaram].

Adi Shankara established the Sringeri Peetham as the 1st of 4 amnaaya peetams.

The four being
1. Sarada Peetam at Sringeri.
2. Govardhana Peetam at Puri
3. Kalika at Dwaraka
4. Jyothir at Badarikashramam.

He installed his 4 most prominent shishyas as heads of the peetams.

Sureshwaracharya was assigned to Sringeri as its head.

Sringeri is a corruption of Rshyashrunga giri.

Rshyashrunga maharshi [and his father Sri Vibandhaka Maharshi] did their tapas at this place.

It is at Sringeri that Shankara spent 12 of His precious 32 years!!

That gives you and idea how much He loved this place.

Rshyashruga maharshi had a horn on his forehead, a result of being born to a deer. His mere presence was enough to shower rains!!

Rshyashrunga was one who led Putrakamesthi Yaagam of Dasaratha Maharaj and which resulted in Sri Rama's birth!!

Rshyashrunga Maharshi after conducting Putrakamesthi for Dasaratha Maharaj and heralding advent of Sri Rama came back to Sringeri to do tapas.

His tapo balam was such that even eons later a snake held shelter to a frog which was giving birth.

This incident made Adi Shankaracharya to see who had done tapas at the place earlier.

Shankaracharya realized thru His tapas that it was same place as Rshyashrunga's tapo bhoomi. And decided no other place could match its intensity.

He had earlier, when He defeated Sri Mandana Mishra [Sureswaracharya's poorvashramam], obtained boon from Saraswati that She will stay whereever Shankara wanted Her to.

So He drew a Sri Chakram on stone and installed a sandalwood statue of Saradamba and invoked Her to come to Sringeri. Thus was born the Sringeri Peetam.

When Rsishyashrunga Maharshi left his mortal coil, his light merged into Shiva Lingam he had worshiped throughout his life. That particlar temple exists even today at Kigga about 10 kms from Sringeri. The lingam there has a Shrugam [horn] on it!!

Rshyashrunga Maharshi's father Sri Vibandhaka Maharshi when he left the earth merged into a lingam. That place is Malahanikareswara. The Malahanikareswara Lingam is in Sringeri itself and worshiped even to this day.

Sri Adi Shankaracharya also established 4 guardian deities / kshetra palakas at Sringeri :
Kaalikamba,
Hanuma,
Durga Parameswari
and Kala Bhairava.

It is to this Durga Parameswari that the 33rd Acharya pleaded to reduce the Mahammari during that time. The same Durga Parameswari Stotram which our Mahasannidhanam gave to us to prevent the corona virus.

Kalabhairva in Nrusimha Vanam.

The Sandalwood Saradamba vigraham which Adi Shankaracharya installed was worshiped until Sri Vidyaranya's time, subsequently the current Golden Saradamba was installed. One can still see original Saradamba who is now in Vidyashankara Temple.

Shankaracharya composed many of His Advaitic works during His 12 year stay at Sringeri.

Another thing to note is Shankaracharya also brought the Sarvajna peetam from Sarada Peetam in Kashmir to Sringeri. Maybe He realized future!

The 4 most prominent shishyas of Shankaracharya - Sureswacharya
Totakacharya
Hastamalaka &
Padmapaadacharya.

Everyone except Sureswaracharya had come to Shankara.Adi Shankara Himself went in search of Mandana Mishra.

Hence Sri Adi Shankacharaya had a GREAT regard for Sureswaracharya. It is said that Adi Shankaracharya said it elated Him that He was giving Sanyasa deeksha to Sureswaracharya.

Totakacharya was previously known as Giri. He looked after daily needs and wants of Shankaracharya with utmost devotion. He was looked down since he was not so intelligent.

But when even Padmapada looked this way Shankaracharya gave Giri self-realization. Overwhelmed with devotion he composed Thotakasthakam [8 stanzas in praise of Adi Shankara] in thotaka meter.

Henceforth he was known as Thotakacharya. He condensed Upanishads into "Sruti Sara Samuddharana" also in thotaka meter.

Padmapadacharya was Adi Shankara's first disciple. Unfortunately his original name is lost in time. He was given sanyasa name of Sanandana. He was a great Narasimha Upasaka and had great unrivaled devotion towards Shankara.

Once he was on other bank of Ganga when Shankaracharya called him. Without thinking twice he started walking on river and Ganga put a lotus under his feet to sustain henceforth he was called Padmapadacharya.

An incident occurred at Srisailam [iirc]. A kaapalika wanted to rule world and to do that he had to give "bali" of either a saint or a king. He approached Shankaracharya who verily agreed on 1 condition that kaapalika could have His head when Shankaracharya's disciples were away.

So when disciples were at paatala ganga doing oblations, kaapalika came to give Shankaracharya's bali. Padmapadacharya sensed something was amiss & prayed to Narasimha who manifested into Padmapadacharya & killed the kaapalika. That was Padmapada's devotion towards Adi Shankara.

Hastamalaka - when Shankaracharya was sojourning in South and had bhiksha [bhojanam] at a place, the parents brought a boy and presented him before Shankaracharya saying the boy was dumb.

When Shankaracharya looked at the boy He knew he was a gyani and asked him who he was. The boy replied w/ a 12 stanza poem condensing gist of advaitam. Since he had gyaanam as a "aamalaka" in hand, he was called Hastamalaka.

Shankaracharya told others how this boy had gynanam since birth. On banks of Yamuna a saint was in meditation when some girls came to bathe. One of them had a 2 yr baby. She left the baby near saint asking him to take care.

But the baby crawled into river and died. Mother was grief stricken which woke the saint. He blamed himself for it and left his body and entered into the baby. Hence the baby had the gyaan of the saint.

Until Sri Vidyaranya's time Sringeri peetam was very small with the Jagadguru and about 40-50 sevaks. But it didn't stop the Jagadgurus from composing amazing scriptures. They still directed worthwhile students on path of self-realization.

Now onto the Guruparampara of Sringeri Peetham.

The 1st Jagadguru is, obviously, Adi Shankaracharya. After Him was 2 - Sureswaracharya.

Sri Sureswaracharya was the Jagadguru btwn 820-834 CE. He wrote many commentaries and slokas explaning Advaitam. He also wrote bhashyam on Dakshinamurthy Stotram which's known as Manasollasa Vartika and explains in detail the Dakshinamurthy Stotram.

just a disclaimer. I am using the timelines as mentioned by the Sringeri Matham. Not going to indulge in talking about the other timelines etc in this thread.

Additionally, any and all mistakes are mine and mine only.

Sri Sureswaracharya codified the conduct of everythign that we see in Sringeri today. For example the dress that ritwiks / students wear in Sringeri was also set by Sri Sureswaracharya. The patasala, pooja paddhati etc all from his time only.

One can see his adhisthanam abutting Sharadamba temple in Sringeri. The one to the left of the temple in this pic is Sri Sureswaracharya's adhistanam.

After Sri Sureswaracharya came 3 - Nityabodhaghana. He worte Samkehpa Sarirakam. [not much is known abt early acharyas, unfortunately].

After him it was 4-Jnanaghana. He wrote Tattvasudhi. It is considered Acharya's exposition to His disciples.

5 - Jnanottama [910-954] followed him. He wrote a commentary on Brahma Sutra Bhashyams.

6 - Jnanagiri [954-1038] was the next Acharya.

7 - Simhagiri [1038-1098]

8- Iswara Tirtha [1098-1146]

9-Narasimha Tirtha [1146-1229]

Then came one of the greatest Acharyas 10 - Sri Vidya Shankara Tirtha [1229-1333].

He was a great Yogi. He was probably the ONLY acharya in Sringeri Parampara to have given sanyasa deeksha to 2 disciples.

He was the Jagadguru for 104 years. After which he took up Lambika yoga samadhi.

He told his disciples that he would be in it for 12 years after which there would be a Shiva Linga where he started his Tapas.

Saying he went into a room. One of his attendants thought how can the Jagadguru live without air and opened the chamber after 3 yrs ... only to find topmost portion was Linga.

So Sri Vidyaranya and Sri Bharati Krishna Teertha installed another Linga over the chamber.

The magnificent Vidya Shankara Temple is built on this.

It is strongly believed that this great Yogi is still in the chamber in Lambika Yoga.

For this reason all the Srimukhas issued by Sringeri Math even today are issued under the seal of Sri Vidya Shankara Mahaswami only.

I will stop here. I will tweet on one of the crestjewels of Sringeri parampara Sri Vidyaranya a bit later.