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On March 13, H.H. Jayendra Saraswati, Shankarachariya of Kanchi, consecrated an enormous temple that depicts the Shankaran theological stance perhaps more than any other structure on earth. While expounding an absolute monism philosophically, theologically Shankara molded a new quasi-Vedic school which blended traditions and worship patterns of existing Hindu sects and sampradayas. The newly completed temple, located in Allahabad, Uttara Pradesh, separately houses the Supreme God of each of the major Hindu sects, Saivism, Vaishnavism and Saktism. The first tier of the three-tiered temple houses the idol of Sri Kamakshidevi (Shakti), the second that of Tirupati Venkatachalapathi (Vishnu) surrounded by 108 saligramams representing the important Vaishnavite shrines in the country. The third floor houses a huge, 13-foot tall Yoga Sahasra Lingam weighing 1.5 tons representing God Siva. The Lingam is surrounded by representations of 108 Saiva kshetras (holy sites) and 12 jyotirpeetas (monasteries) of the country. Wall panels depict each of the important shrines of India. And there is a life-size image of Adi Shankara in worship.

The unusual temple was conceived nearly 50 years ago by H.H. Chandrasekharendra Saraswati, the saintly senior to Jayendra, holder of the gadhi since 1957. It, along with various other shrines authorized by the Shankarachariyas, is an abrupt and intentional departure from traditional temple architecture based on the Agama scriptures. Construction began in 1969 through the Sankara Academy of Sanskrit Culture and Classical Arts, New Delhi.

The temple is acclaimed as among the most spectacular shrines in the city, cost about U.S. \$5 million, covers an area of one acre, and rises to a height of 140 feet. Several hundred devotees led by the Shankarachariya participated in the final ceremonies. The pontiff bathed the presiding deities with water and sand collected from all over India. Sri Jayendra Saraswati in his message on the occasion said he hoped the temple will serve the cause of national integration as Adi Shankara, through his teachings of Advaita, "brought about religious unity." On the last assumption, it is debated whether the 9th century saint really brought about unity

or simply created a new eclectic sect now widely known as the Smarta sampradaya.