As in any Hindu temple serving to the religious and spiritual needs of devotees, Sri Siva Vishnu Temple (SSVT) derives its core strength from three sources:

1. The Sthapati who creates the structure and silpis who do the sculptures of deities,
2. the Acharyas who consecrate the images and bring saanidhyam,
3. and the priests who perform pujas at the temple everyday.

SSVT has been fortunate on all these counts. At the time of planning, building and consecration, as the concept of a unique Hindu temple in the Nation’s Capital Area became a reality, SSVT had access to the guidance of three eminent Acharyas: Dr. V. Ganapati Sthapati who as Aasthana Sthapati designed and built the temple; Sri Sambamurthy Sivachariar and Sri Savya Sachi Swamigal who as Aasthana Acharyas, presided over temple’s consecration. The two Acharyas had instituted a comprehensive system of worship to the deities of Siva and Vishnu Pariwar deities with foresight that is being largely being followed till today. They had been mindful of local (kshethra) realities of maintaining a large Hindu temple in a foreign land. Fortunately, SSVT has continued to host a pool of well-versed Agama and Vaideeka priests serving with dedication who continue the established puja vidhis over the past 3 decades.

In Hindu religious traditions, continuity of Sampradaya is a key component that ensures not only the knowledge and practice originated by a preceptor are preserved but also Aradhana (worship) of deities continues without a break in time and integrity. Sri Sivachariar attained the Lotus Feet of Goddess Kaligambal in 2003.

Dr. Ganapathy Sthapati attained Sivalokam in 2011 and Sri Savya Sachi Swamigal Attained Vaikunta in 2014. By the grace of GOD, SSVT has been able to maintain continuity of Sampradaya as established by our founding Acharyas and architects. Sri Shanmukha Sivachariar son of Swargasri Sambamurthy Sivachariar kindly agreed to be our Asthana Saiva Acharya and has been guiding the temple after the his illustrious father; Sri Selvanathan Sthapati, nephew and the prime disciple of Dr. Ganapathy Sthapati, took up the torch as our Asthana Sthapati and is leading the current Jeernodharana efforts. Sri Acharya Ramswaroop Raghavacharyulu of Bhadrachalam Sri Seetha Ramachandra Swamy Devasthanam agreed to be our Asthana Vaishnava Acharya to guide the Aradhana of Vaishnava Deities.

The word 'Parampara’ – literally means “proceeding from one to another “and the three new Acharyas have been handed over the torches of guiding SSVT in to the future. How fortunate we are to have such eminent experts guiding us! We bow to these three eminent personalities who have been entrusted to safeguard the past.

Acharya Parampara
Compiled by S.V. Krishnaswamy
Born into a renowned Sivachariar family Dr. T.S. Sambamurthy Sivachariar was instrumental in raising the stature of the Hindu priestly profession around the world. As head of a large number of Sivachariars, Sri Sivachariar traveled the globe dedicating temples and seeing to it that traditional ritual worship was followed not only in the motherland but also in Washington D.C., Texas, Boston, Hawaii, U.K., Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Australia and Thailand.

Sri Sambamurthy Sivachariar had dedicated his whole life in promoting proper Sampradayam in temple, preserving Saiva Agama traditions and creating many generations of Saiva Agama Acharyas. He has garnered the respect of everyone who met him, even those not normally generous in their regard for priests. He had participated in more than 2,000 Kumbhabhishekams, the most complex of all temple ceremonies, all across India and in many other countries. SSVT was inaugurated and established under his guidance. At SSVT he conducted the Siva Kumbhabhishekam in 1991, presided over Satha Chandi Homam in 1999 and along with Sri SavyaSachi Swamigal conducted Mahotsavam in 1996. He has taught, guided and nurtured many Saiva Agama Acharyas who continue to serve the larger Hindu congregation across the world. He attained Sivaloka praapthi in 2003.

Sri Shanmukha Sivachariar, son of the Swarga Sri Sambamurthy Sivachariar, a much revered upasaka of Kaligambal, is our temple's Asthana Sivachariar now since the passing away of his father in 2003.

He has a unique blend of Vaideeka and Agama Sastras by virtue of learning under notable preceptors of previous generation. In addition to tutelage in the theory and practice of Saiva Agama Sastraas by his father, he was taught by Mahamahopadyaya Dr. R. Krishnamurthy Ganapadigal, recipient of the President's Award in 2015. He is a Sanskrit scholar with 'Vedanta Shironmani' from Madras Sanskrit college – an unique accomplishment for a Sivachariar. He has specialized in Hindu temple rituals and obtained a PhD in Sanskrit with special focus on Saiva Agamas. Like his father, he is sought by Hindu diaspora all over the world for Kumbhabhishekams and other special Pujas.

He has a special corner for the next generation Hindu children and youth growing up in countries outside India. He is an articulate speaker in English and Tamil and conveys his passion for preserving Hindu dharma and traditions to modern youth in a language they understand better.

At SSVT he has presided over Skanda Shashti, Devi and Maha Ganapathy Mahotsavams in 1996 and 2013. He is spearheading the current Kumbhabhishekam event along with other Acharyas of the temple.
Sri Sri SavyaSachi Swamigal born in a traditional Vaishnava family, had his early training in Sanskrit and Aagama Shaastra at the Maharaja Sanskrit Patashala in Mysore. He started his career as a school teacher and was a priest for over six decades in Sri Rama Temple in Hiremagalur, Karnataka, an ancient temple which is said to have a record of unbroken worship of the deity for nearly a thousand years. He has presided over the establishment and consecration of hundreds of temples and participated in major religious events all over India and USA.

Sri Sri SavyaSachi Swamigal consecrated all the Main Deities and Vishnu Pariwar during the Kumbhabhishekams in 1992, and 1993 and the Rajagopuram (along with Rajappa Gurukkal) in 2002. He also presided over the Gita Jnana Yajnam in 2006. He was the guiding light of our temple as the first Pradhana Acharya for the Vaishnava Sampradayam.

Sri Sri SavyaSachi Swamigal was truly a realized soul. His life has two messages for us: (1) Abheda Darshanam Jnanam. “Experience of Oneness is True Wisdom” - is an inscription at the entrance of our temple. Pujya Sri Swamigal was the living embodiment of this precept. (2) Flexibility given in Sastraas in observing our Ritualistic Practices. He was an embodiment of humility, compassion, devotional excellence and love! Sri Sri Swamigal, who is well-versed in Kannada, Telugu, Tamil, Hindi and English, was a speaker who could explain most profound Hindu philosophical concepts in a way both young and old can understand.

Sri Koti Ramaswaroop Raghavacharyulu is our temple’s Asthana Vasihnava Acharya now since the passing away of Sri Savya Sachi Swamigal in 2013. He will be one of the presiding acharyas for the Jeernodharanam & Kumbhabhishekam conducted this year at SSVT.

He is serving as Deputy Pradhana Acharya at Seeta Ramachandra Swamy temple in Bhadrachalam, Andhra Pradesh (current Telangana). He is an erudite scholar in Pancharatra Aagama and conducted hundreds of kratuvus (Yajna) and performed over 200 Pratisthapanas.

He hails from a family of long and dedicated lineage of priests over 400 years serving Bhadrachalam Sri Rama Temple. Sri Bhakta RamaDas selected 5 families of Priests from Sri Rangam to serve in Bhadrachalam, 400 years ago. Sri Ramaswaroop’s family is one of those original five families who has been serving the Temple for over 400 years. He served as Pradhana Acharya for Sri Rama Koti Japa Mahotsavam at SSVT in 2008. As part of this mahotsavam he presided over Sahasra Rama Taraka Mantra Homam, Sri Rama Pattabhishekam and Sita-Rama Kalyanam.
Dr. V. Ganapathi Sthapati was our temple’s Aasthana Sthapati from even before the inception of the temple from 1980s. He was a great Sanskrit scholar, mathematician and above all a national treasure in temple architecture and sculpture. He was groomed in the traditional science of Vaastu and temple architecture (stha-pathyam) by his father and later graduated in Mathematics. From 1960, he was the Principal of Tamil Nadu Government’s dedicated College for Architecture and Sculpture.

From the 1980s, Sthapati campaigned to restore and elevate the status of traditional Hindu architecture and Silpis profession in modern Indian society; he established the Vaastu Vedic Trust and the Vaastu Vedic Research Foundation, aimed at research, development, and globalization of Vaastu Shastra. In addition to advising various governments and institutions on promoting the science and teaching of Temple Architecture, he has authored widely respected books on the topic giving a contemporary definition to Vaasthu Shastra.

His contributions in Temples construction both in and out of India are countless. In addition to SSVT, he has built many other temples in Chicago, Hawaii and other places in USA. He received the Padma Bhushan from the President of India in 2009. He left a legacy of Temples, knowledgebase of building traditions and numerous students in 2011.

Sthapati R. Selvanathan hails from an illustrious family of Temple Architects and Sculptors and is nephew and the direct prime disciple of Vaastu Scientist (Vijnani) Padmabushan Dr. V Ganapathi Sthapati. His forefather, the celebrated Sthapati Kunjaramallan Rajaraja Perunthachan (10th century AD) was the Designer and builder of the world-renowned Sri Brihadeeshwara Temple of Tanjore, Tamilnadu, India. From his early childhood, Selvanathan Sthapati associated himself with Dr.V. Ganapathi Sthapati by assisting him with all Projects executed in India and abroad. He has also studied technical Sanskrit under Gurukulam system with the senior Sthapati.

Apart from his traditional schooling with his paternal uncle, Sri Selvanathan (Madhu), graduated in Temple Architecture from the University of Madras.

As a well-respected Sthapati who started at a young age, he has designed and built many temples and managed turnkey projects around the globe for over 30 years. Over the years, he has handled many critically sensitive renovation projects on age old temple structures and divine sculptures. He has participated in number of Vaasthu and Shilpa Shastra Seminars, forums conducted by the Vaastu Vedic Research Foundation, Chennai Surabhi Foundation, New Delhi, International stone research Centre, Gujarat and other Institutions all over India and abroad. Sthapati Selvanathan has received many awards and titles in recognition of his dedicated service in this traditional field of art and architecture in India and abroad. In April 2015, he received the Award “Kalai Chudamani” from the Tamil Nadu Govt. He has been associated with SSVT for a long time as Resident Sthapati in 1990 with his uncle and took over the charge as the Asthana Sthapati from 2011.