Hindu culture teaches “The Guest is God” and with good reason! The guest brings a fresh view, new energy, new ideas and a vigorous presence into the existing structure. Here at ICYER in January we were blessed with the presence of many eminent “guests”. Nischala (Joy) Devi and her husband Bhaskar were eminent honoured guests at the Purnima Puja of Swami Gitananda on January 6th at Sri Kambliswamy Madam. Nischala and Bhaskar are amongst the most prominent disciples of Sri Swami Satchitananda, who built Yogavilla in Virginia, U.S.A, having been associated with him for more than 30 years. Nischala a medical specialist is the person in chance of the Yoga programme of Dr. Dean Ornish Horal famous Heart Care programmes in the U.S.A. World famous, she also travels the world lecturing and teaching. Meenakshi Devi first met Nischala at Prashanthi Nikatan in Bangalore, December 21st, where they shared the stage at an International Yoga Conference. Meenakshi Devi found Nischala a warm, wise, witty human bela and was delighted when she accepted the initiate to be present as a special guest of the Purnima Puja along with her husband Bhaskar.

Other special guests at the Purnima Puja who gave a real “Spice” to the celebration included Dr. T.R. Anantharaman, one of India’s senior scientists and Yoga Scholars of New Delhi, Dr. R.G. Singh, Head, Dept. of Nephrology, Institute of Medical Science, Banaras Hindu University, Varanasi, Smt. Arja, leading Yoga expert of Bangalore; Sri Jindel, the “Nauli-man”, a 75 – year old expert in Nauli Kriya, and a leading citizen of Jaipur, amongst others.

Of course, for us here at the Ashram, the most important “special guest” who is not at all the “guest” but a prominent member of our extended Yoga world family and one of the most important disciples of Sri Swami Gitananda – Yogacharya Aruna Nath Giri of Argentina. Arunath who has been a senior disciple of Swamiji for almost four decades, led a group of eleven of his won disciples on a pilgrimage tour in India the first two weeks in January. His first stop for a week’s visit and Sadhana was Pondicherry, where he and his students stayed in ICYER and participate in all the Ashram’s programmes. They also took active part in the Yoga Festival during their stay from January 4th to 11th. Arunanath is a leading global Yoga Guru in his own right and has established several centres throughout Europe and South America, especially in Italy and Argentina. Faithful to the Rishiculture Ashtanga Yoga tradition, he has spread the valued teaching of his Yoga Master, Swami Gitananda, far and wide. For Aruna Nath, it was a sweet home coming especially to see the new “Ashram baby” Dhivya Priya, since he had been present on February 25th, 2001, at the wedding of Dr. Ananda and Devasena. Aruna Nath also gave Satsangha for the students of the Six Month Course and reported on his work of systematically a series of video tapes of Swamiji lecturing on various esoteric topics in 1984-85. The Ashram family especially enjoyed the presence of Aruna Nath and his well disciplined loving disciples.