

To: Her Holiness AMMA MATA AMRITANANDAMAYI DEVI
Chancellor, AMRITA VISHWA VIDYAPEETHAM

From: Nannapaneni Narayana Rao
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Om Amriteswaryai Namaha!

At the outset, please accept the garland of my eight books, the products of my lifetime, from 1972 to 2006, as depicted on the last page of this letter!

I am writing this letter as a consequence of my communications with Dr. Venkat Rangan, Vice Chancellor, AMRITA VISHWA VIDYAPEETHAM, following my return to the United States in August, after teaching the five-week inaugural course at Ettimadai over the EDUSAT Network under the Indo-US Inter-University Collaborative Initiative on Higher Education and Research. During our five-week stay at Ettimadai, I and my family (wife and daughter) fell in love with AMRITA!

At Ettimadai, I have reached my destination, destination of science, spirituality, and service, my “station in life,” in my 60th year after high school, with 41 years of tenure as a professor at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 19 of which have been as Associate Head of the Department! In the faculty workshop I conducted at AMRITAPURI on August 5, someone asked me how I, a scientific person, became spiritual. I did not have a ready answer then. I simply answered by saying that it is highly unlikely that a person becomes spiritual all of a sudden from being a nonbeliever, and that I believed that spirituality already exists in a person; in other words, the germ is already there in the individual, and it germinates at the right time and grows under the right progression of circumstances. Later, after returning to the U.S., and after some reflection, I realized that it all began in 1987 with a statue depicting Gitopadesa. Known as the “Arjuna Wijaya” statue, it is located in Jakarta, Indonesia. It opened for me in 1987 as the “spiritual door.” After passing through a number of doors, I finally reached my destination, after 19 years, at AMRITA, where I could pursue science, spirituality, and service (seva)!! Until then, it was either science or spirituality, but not both!

At Ettimadai, I found a home away from home, that is, AMRITA in Ettimadai, where I can devote my time away from my home in Urbana, if not continuously, at least in lengthy periods. I found that that sun rising between the twin peaks is not an ordinary sun! There is some powerful force in it! That jumbo elephant behind the campus, it is so

majestic! Watching the "young minds" getting off from the AMRITA buses in the morning and walking to the classes made me feel so proud! The Saraswathi statue in front of the main building, She is the most beautiful Saraswathi I have seen, embodiment of knowledge! Made me feel so proud of our heritage! When I left at the end of the five-week period, I left my heart there, at AMRITA in Ettimadai. As I was traveling back, and after I went back, I kept saying to myself, "I must go back to Ettimadai. I must sit in front of that Saraswathi and write my next book, to be dedicated to Amma Mata Amritanandamayi Devi! And that will be my most successful book!"

As a result of my experience at Ettimadai and all the above, soon after I went back to the United States, I made an important decision to give up my administrative position of Associate Head of the Department, which I have held for 19 years, out of my overall tenure of 41 years at the University of Illinois. Thus, effective October 2, I will not be Associate Head of the Department. I will still be continuing as the Jordan Professor, having connections to one of the top-ranked electrical and computer engineering departments in the world, as an active faculty member.

I have communicated extensively with Dr. Venkat Rangan, following the above decision, when we were both in the United States. We talked about establishing a bond with AMRITA through an honorary appointment as "Distinguished AMRITA Professor," which, in the words of Dr. Venkat Rangan, "designates the University's highest level Professorship and also celebrated as something that is given only to very select cases for Internationally Distinguished Scientists/Leaders, and handed down directly from AMMA." It is also consistent with one of his statements: "It is amazing how much you are respected both here in the west and in the east."

As though it was destined to happen, a gold bracelet that was put on my wrist by Viswayogi Viswamjee Swamiji of Guntur, Andhra Pradesh, as a symbol of the Gnana Ratna Award he conferred on me at the time of his 60th birthday celebration on March 5, 2004, in Viswanagar, near Guntur, bonded itself to AMRITA by dropping off of my wrist unknowingly to me!

Yes, I have reached my "destination," my "station in life!"
At AMMA's Vishwa Vidyapeetham in Ettimadai!
Where AMRITA SURYA shines brightly and magnificently!
Where AMRITA SARASWATHI reigns majestically and gracefully!
Where AMRITA GAJA graces the background majestically!
Where the beautiful "young minds," AMRITA SISHYAs, strive for knowledge!
Where "OM NAMAHA SIVAYA" is the greeting for one and all!
Where the gold bracelet of my Gnana Ratna Award bonded itself!
By dropping off of my wrist unknowingly to me!
There, I have reached my Destination of Science, Spirituality, and Service!
By the Grace of the Divine Mother, AMMA MATA AMRITANANDAMAYI DEVI!
And from there, I shall "WORKSHIP" with "GRATTITUDE!"
That is, with the principle of "Work is Worship," and with an "Attitude of Gratitude!"
Om Amriteswaryai Namaha!

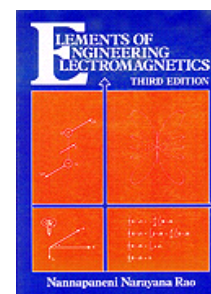
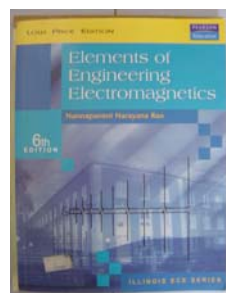
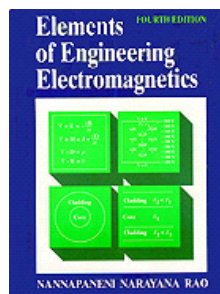
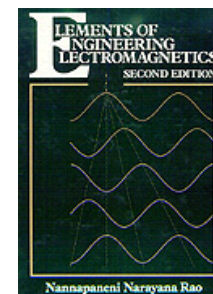
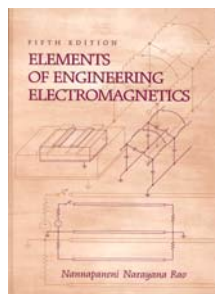
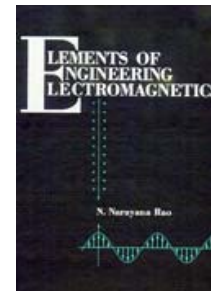
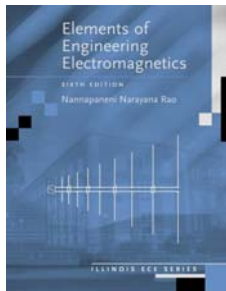
Finally, I have read somewhere that destination is a journey and not a success in itself. Yes, destination is a journey; at AMRITA the journey begins to chart a new course where the sky is no limit and the destination is only one's imagination!

I now humbly request you to grant me the appointment as "Distinguished AMRITA Professor," to do seva for You and Your cause at AMRITA, with American passport but Indian blood, as an IndiAmerican; with American-cultivated mind and Indian-born heart; with Jordan Professorship from the west and AMRITA Professorship from the east; and with the passion of the Jordan name and the compassion of the AMRITA name!

Om Namah Sivaya!

Nannapaneni Narayana Rao

**A Garland of My Books for
AMMA MATA AMRITANANDAMAYI DEVI,
By Whose Grace I have reached my Destination,
Destination of Science, Spirituality, and Service!**



**Nannapaneni Narayana Rao
September 2006**