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The Telangana Science Journal

Health and Nutrition

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Breast-feeding

Research has long made clear the benefits of breast-feeding. Breast-fed babies suffer fewer illnesses such as diarrhea, earaches and pneumonia, because breast milk contains antibodies that help fend off

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2011 AD, January

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infections. They're also less likely to develop asthma, or even to become fat later in childhood. Nursing mothers shed pregnancy pounds faster, and if they breast-feed long enough can decrease their risk of breast or ovarian cancer. The American Academy of Pediatrics says breast milk alone provides optimal nutrition for babies for about the first six months, the time when most babies begin solid foods, and that breast-feeding should continue to age 1.

By 2020, the government hopes to have 82 percent of women start breast-feeding and raise to about a quarter those whose babies are exclusively breast-fed for about six months. Today, those rates are lowest for black babies, with 58 percent starting out breast-fed and 8 percent exclusively breast-fed for six months.

The surgeon general is working to eliminate obstacles to breast-feeding. Working moms may see the first steps: The new health care law requires that many employers start offering "reasonable" break times to pump milk and a private place to do it. The company bathroom no longer counts. Mothers who cannot or choose not to breast-feed shouldn't be made to feel guilty. Women whose own mothers and grandmothers didn't breast-feed lack support and even may face skepticism. Education of family members, including dad, during prenatal visits that breast-feeding can save up to \$1,500 in infant formula in the first year of life, is urged. Doctors and hospitals should stress the benefits of breast-feeding, before and at delivery. Certified lactation consultants can help ensure women get help with such issues as how the baby latches on and how to ease breast discomfort. But a big focus is on employers, to make sure moms have the time and privacy to pump milk when they return to work.

Research published online in Springer's *Journal of Cancer Survivorship* found that breastfeeding had the potential to influence positively bone mineral density, metabolic syndrome risk factors, cardiovascular disease and secondary tumors.

Healthy Food from Wal-Mart

Wal-Mart said this month that it would change thousands of food products to make them healthier, by reducing sodium and added sugars in some store-brand items. The chain also plans to build more stores in poor areas that lack grocery stores. Company officials pledged to cut the price of fruits and vegetables \$1

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billion a year. This would be done by trimming extra costs from the supply chain. The company also said that it would work to reduce higher prices for some healthier items, such as whole-grain pasta.

New Guidelines for School Lunches

The Agriculture Department proposal applies to lunches subsidized by the federal government and would be the first major nutritional overhaul of school meals in 15 years. The guidelines would require schools to cut sodium in those meals by more than half, use more whole grains and serve low fat milk. They also would limit kids to only one cup of starchy vegetables a week, so schools couldn't offer french fries every day. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack said the new standards could affect more than 32 million children and are crucial because kids can consume as much as half of their daily calories in school. The new guidelines are based on 2009 recommendations by the Institute of Medicine, the health arm of the National Academy of Sciences. The announcement comes just a few weeks after President Barack Obama signed into law a child nutrition bill that will help schools pay for the healthier foods, which often are more expensive.

Olive Oil Reduces Depression and PMS

People who eat more trans fats from cheese, milk or processed foods may have a 48 percent increased risk of depression, compared with those who consume almost no trans fats, a study from [Spain](#) showed. The 48 percent increase in depression risk was found among those whose diet consisted of more than 0.6 percent of calories from trans fats, compared with almost no trans fats. Olive oil, by contrast, appeared to have a slight protective effect against the mental illness among 12,059 Spanish participants in the research, according to a report in the journal [PLoS One](#). The study is the first to analyze the effects of [dietary fat](#) on depression, the authors wrote. Research has already linked trans fats, which are created through a process that adds hydrogen to oil, to increased heart risk. Olive oil contains some chemicals that have anti-inflammatory properties, which may help the circulatory system function better, the authors wrote. People who ate olive oil were less likely to be depressed, the study found. Olive oil contains omega-3 fats and does not contain any trans fats. Other sources of omega-3 oils include flax, walnuts, urad, leafy vegetables such as purslane.

Essential fatty acids such as linoleic acid, gamma linolenic acid, oleic acid, and polyunsaturated acids are substances that are not produced by the human body and are only available from diet containing nuts,

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vegetable oils etc. that provide such acids, which are also available in supplement form. Taking dietary supplements containing essential fatty acids can help reduce the symptoms of premenstrual syndrome, according to the results of study by researchers at a Brazilian university. The study, published in the journal *Reproductive Health*, found that taking capsules containing about 1 gram of a blend of three essential fatty acids produced a significant reduction in PMS symptoms.

Berries and Blood Pressure

Eating just 1 cup of strawberries or blueberries each week can reduce your risk of developing [high blood pressure](#), a major risk factor for [heart disease](#) and [stroke](#). The new findings appear in the February issue of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*. Men and women with the highest amount of anthocyanin from blueberries and strawberries had an 8% reduction in their risk for developing high blood pressure, compared to study participants who ate the least amount of these anthocyanin-rich berries, the study showed.

Anthocyanin is a powerful antioxidant that gives blueberries and strawberries their vibrant color. It may also help open blood vessels, which allows for smoother blood flow and a lower risk for high blood pressure.

Grapes and Obesity

Resveratrol, an antioxidant found in grapes, stimulates the expression of adiponectin, a hormone derived from cells that manufacture and store fat, the team found. Adiponectin has a wide range of beneficial effects on obesity-related medical complications. Both adiponectin and resveratrol display anti-obesity, anti-insulin resistance and anti-aging properties. The study is in the Jan. 7 issue of the *Journal of Biological Chemistry*.

Green Tea and Alzheimer's

Drinking green tea might protect the brain against Alzheimer's and other forms of dementia, scientists have revealed. The ancient Chinese remedy might also play a vital role in protecting the body against cancer, a study, published in the journal *Phytomedicine*, suggests.

Hypothyroidism

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Underactive thyroid results in a condition called hypothyroidism, which can result in symptoms including depression and forgetfulness as well as tiredness and weight gain. These symptoms are often mistaken for general signs of ageing - and the disease can therefore be either misdiagnosed or undiagnosed for some years.

Around 100,000 older people in the UK are missing out on thyroid medicine that could improve their lives, according to a study. *The Journal of Medical Screening* study examined women over 50 and men over 65 - and found 8% had underactive thyroids. The authors of the study believe that women over 50 and men over 65 should be screened for hypothyroidism. They say that if this were done, 100,000 people could benefit from a thyroid treatment called thyroxine.

Breakfast Myth Busted

For years, dieters have been told that the way to lose weight was to start the day with a hearty [breakfast](#). Eat more in the morning and you'll burn more calories and consume less food later in the day, nutritionists have told us. But, now a new study suggests that the only thing a big breakfast does is lard on more pounds. No matter how many calories are consumed in the morning, people eat the same size lunch and dinner — and that adds up to more total calories when the breakfast is big, according to the study, which was published in *the Nutrition Journal*. If you want to lose weight, cut back on the calories you consume in the morning, concluded the team. One has to remember that total calorie intake in a day is what is to be controlled and measured against the daily activity - burned calories. Loading up on calories at breakfast increases the daily total.

Short Breaks for Smaller Waist

Taking short breaks from sitting, even for only one minute, might whittle your waistline and improve your heart [health](#), according to a new study. People in the study who took the most breaks from sitting — up to 1,258 short breaks in one week — were about two pant sizes smaller than those who took the fewest, as few as 99 breaks in one week, said study researcher Genevieve Healy, who studies population health at the University of Queensland in Australia. A smaller [waistline](#) means less abdominal fat and better heart health. Researchers found that even among those who spent a long time sitting, those who took a lot of breaks had smaller waistlines and lower levels of C-reactive [protein](#) — an indicator of inflammation in the body — than those who didn't take breaks.

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The finding comes on the heels of a study published in *the Journal of the American College of Cardiology*, which found that spending more than [four hours of your leisure time](#) in front of your computer or TV a day can increase the risk of being hospitalized for, or dying from, heart disease. A 2009 study of 5,453 people published in the journal *Obesity* showed that a 1-centimeter increase in waist circumference is associated with an increased chance of premature death.

Asian Americans and Indian Americans are Prone to Diabetes

Asian Americans had a consistently lower body mass index, or BMI -- a measure of weight in relation to height -- and lower rates of obesity. In 2006-2008, 25 percent of whites were obese, while 17 percent of Asians were obese. However, researchers found that Asian Americans had consistently higher rates of type 2 diabetes than white Americans from 1997 to 2008. What's more, diabetes rates rose over time for both racial groups -- reaching 8 percent among Asian adults and 6 percent among whites. That was despite the fact that Asian Americans were less likely to be overweight, one of the prime risk factors for type 2 diabetes. The findings, reported in the journal *Diabetes Care*, are in line with past studies showing that Asian background itself is a risk factor for diabetes.

Similarly, Indian Americans have a much stronger tendency to develop the disease than Northern Europeans after comparing the absorption rate of insulin and glucose of the groups. Indian Americans are less sensitive to insulin action, which means the same amount of insulin disposed of much less glucose in Indian Americans than Northern European Americans.

The propensity to become a diabetic is higher in Indians, who have a low threshold for the risk factors. white Americans develop diabetes when the body mass index is 30 and 35. Indians develop it when the BMI is only 25. Reports say people of the Indian continent (India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Mauritius and Mali) share the common prevalence rates and seem to share the susceptibility genes, and the same risk factors. It is applicable to all people of Indian origins irrespective of the place they live. According to WHO projections, the 40 million diabetics in India will go up to 74 million by 2025. WHO has issued a warning that India will be the Diabetes Capital of the World. <http://in.rediff.com/news/2005/apr/19inter1.htm>

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Smoking

Effective January 1, 2011, the U.S. Navy no longer allows smoking onboard their submarines. The ban was instituted to protect non-smokers against secondhand smoke, which has been linked to an increase in developing heart and lung disease and cancer. The ban also matches the Department of Defense's "quit smoking" campaign.

The Navy has been helping submariners prepare for the change by offering smoking cessation classes, issuing nicotine gum or patches, and limiting smoking times. Some submarines already implemented the smoking ban in order to comply with their deployment schedules and the start of the ban. This allowed the crew to quit while they were deployed and return home to their family and friends smoke free. (<http://www.defense.gov/news/newsarticle.aspx?id=62289>)

Smoking increases the risk of breast cancer and other cancers, research released this month finds. Women who smoked at all had a 6% higher chance of developing breast cancer. The average woman's risk of having breast cancer at some point in her life is 1 in 8. Smoking a pack a day before menopause increased that risk to 1 in 7.5. The link was strongest for women who started smoking at a young age. *The journal Archives of Internal Medicine* published the study.

Smoking and obesity are the main reasons the U.S. average lifespan is lower than in other wealthy nations. That's the conclusion of a report released this month. European countries have a larger proportion of smokers now. But the United States led that trend, the report said. It also had high obesity rates much sooner than other countries. These trends are harming Americans' health now, the report said. U.S. life expectancy is a few years lower than in several European countries and Japan. But it should improve, especially for men, because of the decline in smoking rates, the report said. The National Research Council is part of the National Academy of Sciences. They advise the U.S. government on science matters.

Evidence strongly suggests that some chemicals, especially chemicals in cigarette smoke, might cause some cases of diabetes and obesity, U.S. government researchers said. A committee appointed by the National Toxicology Program went through studies looking at links between diabetes and obesity and

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chemicals such as arsenic, chemicals found in plastic, pesticides and cigarette smoke. Especially strong was the link between smoking while pregnant and a child's later risk of becoming obese and developing type-2 diabetes. When a pregnant woman smokes, the baby is often underweight at birth. This can set up a chain of mechanisms that lead to obesity later, which in turn can cause type-2 diabetes.

Young kids who live with a parent who smokes face an increased risk for developing high blood pressure while still children, a new study has found in *Circulation*, online. Warning that children with high blood pressure often become adults with the same problem, the researchers suggested that secondhand smoke poses a substantial and long-term risk to the cardiovascular welfare of young children.

The researchers noted that high blood pressure is the prime risk factor for heart disease. According to the American Cancer Society, about 46,000 non-smoking Americans die from heart disease each year as a result of living with smokers and the secondhand smoke they produce. To gauge the impact of secondhand smoke on young children, the research team examined data on 4,236 healthy boys and girls, 5 to 6 years old, who lived in southwestern Germany. Nearly 29 percent of the children's fathers and almost 21 percent of their mothers were smokers. For about 12 percent of the children, both parents smoked. In fact, children exposed to parental secondhand smoke were 21 percent more likely to have the upper number of their blood pressure reading (the systolic figure, which corresponds to heart contractions) register at levels among the highest 15 percent of the population. Mothers who smoked appeared to confer a worse impact on their child's blood pressure levels than smoking fathers, although the researchers said that likely reflected maternal lifestyle and the generally greater amount of time the mothers spent in the home.

People with early [rheumatoid arthritis](#) (RA) who smoke are less likely to respond to treatment with two of the most commonly used [medications](#) -- an older disease modifying antirheumatic drug called [methotrexate](#) and biologic drugs known as TNF blockers, according to a new study in January's *Arthritis & Rheumatism*. RA is an [autoimmune disease](#) that occurs when the body's immune system misfires against its own joints and tissues, resulting in inflammation, swelling, pain, and ultimately the loss of mobility. Treating RA early with disease-modifying antirheumatic medications is considered the best way to stop this progressive disease in its tracks.

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Alcohol

Alcohol dependency not only affects people who drink excessively, but also spouses, friends and family. A new study in the journal *Alcoholism: Clinical & Experimental Research* finds that alcoholism has a strong connection to when people get married and whether those marriages are successful. The researchers found the association between alcoholism and getting married for the first time at a 23% lower likelihood for women. For men it was 36% lower only after age 29. For both sexes, the researchers concluded that the chance of separation was twice as likely and earlier. They also found that genetics played a role.

Antioxidants for Birth Control

Common antioxidants include vitamins C and E. These work by eliminating molecules called reactive oxygen species that are produced naturally in the body. Stress can cause these chemically active molecules to be overproduced; in large amounts they damage cells indiscriminately. By neutralizing these potentially harmful substances, antioxidants may, theoretically, improve health and slow down the aging process.

Research recently published in *the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences USA* (PNAS), has revealed a possible unexpected side effect of antioxidants: They might cause fertility problems in females. When antioxidants applied to the ovaries of female mice, ovulation levels dropped precipitously. That is, very few eggs were released from the ovarian follicles to reach the site of fertilization, compared to those in untreated ovaries. Reactive oxygen species are produced in response to luteinizing hormone serve, in turn, as mediators for this physiological stimulus leading to ovulation. On the one hand, these findings could prove useful to women who are having trouble getting pregnant, and on the other, further studies might show that certain antioxidants might be effective means of birth control.

Night Light on Your Life

According to a recent study, exposure to electrical light between dusk and bedtime strongly suppresses melatonin levels and may impact physiologic processes regulated by melatonin signaling, such as sleepiness, thermoregulation, blood pressure and glucose homeostasis. The article, "Exposure to room

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light prior to bedtime suppresses melatonin onset and shortens melatonin duration in humans," appears in the March 2011 issue of *Journal of Clinical Endocrinology & Metabolism (JCEM)*.

Melatonin is a hormone produced at night by the pineal gland in the brain. In addition to its role in regulating the sleep-wake cycle, melatonin has been shown to lower blood pressure and body temperature and has also been explored as a treatment option for insomnia, hypertension and cancer. In modern society, people are routinely exposed to electrical lighting during evening hours to partake in work, recreational and social activities. This study sought to understand whether exposure to room light in the late evening may inhibit melatonin production.

Sleeping with the lights on could increase the risk of breast cancer, results from a large 10-year observational study suggest. It may be that leaving the lights on while sleeping interferes with melatonin production, which, in turn, modulates endogenous estrogen levels. Several studies have also associated the circadian rhythm-regulating hormone with a protective effect against breast cancer, according to a report in the February issue of *Chronobiology International*.

Fraudulent Autism Connection to Vaccine Revealed

The conclusions of the 1998 paper by Andrew Wakefield and colleagues was renounced by 10 of its 13 authors and later retracted by the medical journal *Lancet*, where it was published. Still, the suggestion the MMR shot was connected to autism spooked parents worldwide and immunization rates for measles, mumps and rubella have never fully recovered.

A new examination found, by comparing the reported diagnoses in the paper to hospital records, that Wakefield and colleagues altered facts about patients in their study. The analysis, by British journalist Brian Deer, found that despite the claim in Wakefield's paper that the 12 children studied were normal until they had the MMR shot, five had previously documented developmental problems. Deer also found that all the cases were misrepresented when he compared data from medical records and the children's parents.

Last May, Wakefield was stripped of his right to practice medicine in Britain. Many other published studies have shown no connection between the MMR vaccination and autism. But measles has surged in

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Europe and the US, thanks to Wakefield's fraud. In 2008, measles was deemed endemic in England and Wales.

All Work No Play

People who work more hours a week suffer disproportionately from sleep disturbances, back pain and heart problems, according to the German Federal Institute for Occupational Safety and Health, which has conducted multiple studies on the topic. About one in four workers who puts in more than 60 hours a week complains about sleeping problems, reports the group citing two Germany-wide studies. On the other hand, only one in five full-time workers putting in between 35 and 44 hours a week has similar complaints. Meanwhile, only one in 10 of people working part-time (less than 19 hours a week) suffered from any of the health problems. Shift work or flexible hours that meant working some evenings increased the frequency of health complaints, since this doesn't just affect health, but one's social life.

Polio Eradication

Bill Gates' foundation and Abu Dhabi's crown prince are donating \$50 million each to vaccinate children in Afghanistan and Pakistan against polio and other diseases. Sheik Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation say two-thirds of the funds will go toward a pair of vaccines against pneumonia, diphtheria, whooping cough and other ailments afflicting young children in Afghanistan. The rest will be given to the World Health Organization and UNICEF to provide polio vaccines in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Eradicating polio is Bill Gates's top priority, and he announced a major donation to the effort in Davos, Switzerland.

Pakistan was the only country in 2010 to record an increase in cases of the crippling disease to 138, up from 89 in the previous year, according to World Health Organization figures. That made it the nation with the highest incidence of polio in the world. Most cases were in the northwest close to the Afghan border, where battles between the U.S.-supported Pakistani army and Taliban fighters make many areas too dangerous to visit. The army bans travel to parts of the region, citing the security situation, and territory under militant control is highly dangerous for outsiders, even Pakistani aid workers. Last year, one Pakistan Taliban commander declared the vaccine un-Islamic, echoing a few conservative clerics in other Muslim countries. But others have not publicly stated any objections. In Afghanistan, the Taliban

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co-operate with health workers administering the vaccine, in part because doing so adds to the movement's legitimacy.

Polio was eradicated generations ago from the Western world, but remains endemic in Pakistan, Afghanistan, India, and Nigeria. Sometimes fatal and highly contagious, it can be prevented with a few drops of bitter vaccine on a child's tongue. Eradication needs a comprehensive vaccination campaign. Missing even a single child can mean the disease reappearing. In 2010, India recorded 41 cases, Afghanistan 24 and Nigeria 18, according to WHO. A WHO-backed campaign, which began in 1988, aims to eradicate polio from Pakistan by the end of 2011. But some doctors say privately that the target will not be met.

Perception is Reality

A new study published in *Psychological Science* finds that when people look at a gender-neutral face, they are more likely to judge it as male if they're touching something hard and as female if they're touching something soft. It's remarkable that the feeling of handling something hard or soft can influence how you visually perceive a face.

Painkillers May Raise Heart Attack

Naproxen, a generic medicine, appeared to be the least harmful of seven painkillers examined by the Swiss researchers, according to an analysis published in *the British Medical Journal*. Ibuprofen, sold as Advil by New York-based [Pfizer Inc.](#), was found to be associated with the highest stroke risk, followed by another generic, diclofenac.

The analysis bolsters research linking painkillers to health hazards. Vioxx, from Merck & Co. in Whitehouse Station, [New Jersey](#), was withdrawn in 2004 because of heart risks, and Prexige, from [Novartis AG](#) in Basel, [Switzerland](#), failed to win U.S. approval in 2007 after Australian regulators became concerned that the product may cause liver damage. Both Vioxx and Prexige were linked to twice the risk of a heart attack compared with a placebo, the analysis found.

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Cervical Cancer

A study published in the open-access journal *PLoS Medicine* has found that women in the developing world are not getting the cervical [cancer](#) screenings that they need. Not surprisingly, those who have the highest exposure to smoking, unsafe sex, and other cervical cancer risk factors are poor women; this group is also less likely to receive effective screening. As women get older, screening rates in developing countries decline even though older women are more prone to cervical cancer,

Other noteworthy statistics from the study include:

In Austria, over 80% of women receive effective screening.

In Ethiopia and Bangladesh, 1% or less receive effective screening. .

Over 50% of women had never received a pelvic exam in 16 of the 57 countries analyzed.

90% of women in Ethiopia, Malawi and Bangladesh have never had a pelvic exam.

Cervical cancer is one of the most preventable types of cancer. Because of the [Pap smear test](#), the number of [cervical cancer](#) cases has dropped over the past twenty years. However, many women still develop cervical cancer. In fact, over 9,000 women in the U.S. develop cervical cancer every year. While some cases of cervical cancer cannot be prevented, there are many things a woman can do to reduce her risk of developing cervical cancer. <http://cancer.about.com/od/cervicalcancer/a/preventcervical.htm>

Circumcising men can reduce [cervical cancer](#) risk in women in heterosexual couples living in Uganda, according to a new study in *The Lancet*. Circumcision is not widely practiced in many countries in Europe, but cervical cancer rates are very low in these countries. Some Muslim countries practice both male and female circumcision, while almost all Muslim countries practice male circumcision. The impact of circumcision on cervical cancer risk is less clear in the U.S. and other industrialized countries. The rate of cervical cancer seems to be similar in countries with large Muslim populations like Indonesia, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India, and similar to Mexico and Brazil. http://www.wrongdiagnosis.com/c/cervical_cancer/stats-country.htm and http://www.aneki.com/cervical_cancer_countries.html

The human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine Gardasil protects women from cervical cancer. [Last month the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved](#) Gardasil to prevent anal cancer and associated precancerous lesions due to the virus in both males and females aged 9 to 26. The vaccine can potentially protect young men from strains of the virus that cause about 90 percent of anal cancers, as well as several other

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cancers and genital warts. However, few adolescent boys and young men in the United States who are eligible for the vaccine have initiated the three-dose vaccination series.

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Source: The primary sources cited above, New York Times (NYT), Washington Post (WP), Mercury News, Bayarea.com, Chicago Tribune, USA Today, Intellihealthnews, Deccan Chronicle (DC), the Hindu, Hindustan Times, Times of India, AP, Reuters, AFP, womenfitness.net, about.com etc.

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Om! Asatoma Sadgamaya, Tamasoma Jyotirgamaya, Mrityorma Amritamgamaya, Om Shantih, Shantih, Shantih!

(Aum! Lead the world from wrong path to the right path, from ignorance to knowledge, from mortality to immortality, and peace!)

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