

Yalda, Panorama of Mehr Midday the Earth in the Middle of the Sky

In Baluchestan Region, the city of Nimruz is situated on a meridian. Iranian people believe that the meridian stands at the center of the mainland between China and Western Europe. That might explain why it is called Nimruz. Nimruz refers to the point of time at which the city falls on the middle of the earth during the interval between the sunrise and the sunset. In fact, this is the name of part of the earth which is facing the sky. This area would have been selected as the meridian and the world clock or Greenwich to have more accurate nominal divisions corresponding to the relational real world. Similar cases of this relationship between the sky and the earth can be found in Iranian civilization for instance in names of people, Mahvash and Khurvash or in the name of places Nimruz, Bakhtaran and Khavarān, on occasions, June and September, and in different events such as Yalda and Nowruz.

The spatial bonds between the earth and the sky are so strong in Iranian culture that the separation of sky and its elements from this culture seems impossible. Yalda is the longest night of the year and the birthdate of Mithra who bestows her blessing and benefaction to mankind. The sun is the symbol of blessing and growth and it is born at Yalda. The appellation of the times and places based on the sun-related events indicate the value and outstanding nature of some of the times with respect to others.

The selection of the special days and places construct Iranian specific landscapes. The suffix “Gāh” which is used for place and time somehow reflects the resemblance of the nature of time and place in the Iranian myths. The terms Meidāngāh [plaza] and Sobhgāh [morning] stand for place and time respectively. Time and place are recognized by the earth's displacement with respect to the sun. The use of the suffix “Gāh” for the earth and the sky might be a proof showing the inherent unity between the time and place as two basic elements known to man. Therefore, Iranian culture and the events and names related to time and the sky can better reflect Iran's unique landscape. The map on the cover of this issue illustrates the forefathers' imagination of the earth's old lands and Nimruz meridian.

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