

## **Geo Spatial Positioning in Humanity**

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### **Abstract**

Space is something which is indefinable. We cannot find a fixed definition for space. It is indescribable too. There is no boundary set for space. Physical space is often conceived in three linear dimensions, although modern physicists usually consider it, with time, to be part of a boundless four-dimensional continuum known as space time. The concept of space is considered to be of fundamental importance to an understanding of the physical universe. It is also important in the science of architecture too. Space, especially the concept of the four directions, namely, the East, the South, the West and the North, has a crucial role in Vastu Sastra.

My purpose behind this paper is to bring forward the importance of the four cardinal directions and also to make awareness about the concepts behind each of these directions.

**Key words:** Cardinal directions, Vastu Sastra, Indra, Yama, Varuna, and Kubera

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We know that there are mainly four directions: the East, the South, the West, and the North. But how many of us know the concept behind these directions? My purpose behind writing this paper is to make awareness about the concepts associated to the four cardinal directions. Each direction has a divine concept behind it. The East is the domain of Indra, the God of the universe. It is in the South where Yama, the God of death, situates. The importance of the West is that Varuna, the God of water, exists in this direction. And in the

North, Soma, the God of medicine, situates. But there is a contradiction that Kubera, the God of wealth, dominates the North.

As the Sun, the main source of energy, rises in the East, humans consider this direction as the most prominent one. The activities of the nature are dependent on the Sun. Though the other directions are also equally important, the East is given more importance mainly because of the Sun's existence. However, each direction has its own value. Apart from the East, the West is also prominent. It is the domain of Varuna, the God of water. Without water, nothing is possible. It is believed that, in the South, Yama, the God of death, resides. So the obsequies are done towards the South.

To quote Nalappatt Narayanamenon:

Anantham ajnatham avarnaneeyam

Ee loka golam thiriyunna margam

Athingalengandoridathirunnu

Nokkunna marthyan kathayenthu kandu? (*Kannuneerthulli,4*)

Through these lines, he expresses his concern about peoples' ignorance. However, the achievements made by men are far greater than Nalappadan's perspectives. Through numerical measurements, they calculated and fixed the positions of the earth. The discoveries of men were, in fact, unbelievable.

When we analyse the scientific reasons for the importance given to each direction, we come to know that each belief has a scientific truth behind it. For instance, it is said that,

North direction is the suitable place for digging water resources such as wells and ponds. Though Varuna, the God of water, is believed to be existed in West, the geographical position makes North perfect direction for water resources. Likewise, it is said that, when we lie, it is best to place our head towards the direction of East. It helps increase the blood circulation and also makes us energetic.

Of the four cardinal directions, East has several peculiarities. As I already said, East is given prime importance mainly because of the sun rise. It is believed that the Sun is the main source of life and energy. The role of the Sun in the growth and development of the nature is invaluable. As per the Indian culture, a day begins by worshipping the Sun (Sooryanamaskaram). This habit itself emphasizes how important the role of the Sun is!

The existence of the earth is, in fact, dependent on the Sun. There are several phenomena based on the Sun. *Njattuvela*- the suitable time for transplantation- is one such a phenomenon. It is the time taken by the Sun to rotate one star in the astrological cycle. There are twenty seven stars in this cycle, and thus, we have totally twenty seven *Njattuvelas*. The popular among them is the *Thiruvathira Njattuvela*, which means the time taken by the Sun to rotate the star named *Thiruvathira*.

One *Njattuvela* is in between thirteen and fourteen days. It is the suitable time for agriculture. Farmers wait for each *Njattuvela* to come for sowing the seeds. It makes better yield. Thus the role played by the Sun in agriculture is undeniable.

Now let us think about the importance of the West. Though Soma (moon), the God of medicine, is believed to be existed in North, the moon rises in the West. The moon influences

the water content in the water. Thus, west is the suitable place to grow plants, especially medicinal plants. Moon light helps grow the plants and maintains the water content in them.

As it is already said, humans consider south as the suitable direction towards which the rituals after death are to be performed. It is mainly because of the belief that south is associated with Yama, the God of death. A dead body is cremated in the south direction. Thus in human life, south is mainly associated with the obsequies performed for the dead.

North is considered the best direction to dig water resources such as wells and ponds. As the earth is round, its geographical positioning marks a slope towards north direction. Thus, the architectures prefer north direction to dig water resources.

Thus, when we analyse the beliefs and their scientific side associated with each cardinal direction, we can understand that human life has an undeniable relationship with each of the four cardinal directions. These directions carry an important role in positioning human life.

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