

# Why References to Japan are Lacking in Persian Classic Texts in Comparison with China and Silla

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## Abstract

Relations between Iran and the East Asia date back to ancient times. These interactions ranged in function and scale from the initial development of overland trade routes by hopeful merchants, all the way to the political entanglements of ruling dynasties. These relations can be traced through material culture but also through their incorporation into written texts. Although, China (Čīn) and Korea (Silla) had been referenced in relation to the Zoroastrian heroes of the resurrection, Japan did not have any position in this regard according to Persian texts. Additionally, the name China was known for the Middle Persian languages such as Sogdian, Manichean and Zoroastrian Pahlavi texts, those texts have never mentioned the name of Japan. Although, many scholarly works have been published on Iran-Japan historical relations, the author believes that some aspects of these relations need to be reviewed. Zoroastrian late texts describe Čīnestān while it is hard to explain the term included Japan and Silla, but this information can be seen frequently in the Early Islamic Periods widely about Silla. According to the Persian texts, Čīn and Silla were two “holy toponyms” where the final (Zoroastrian) savior would come to rescue Iran from the Arabs. Surprisingly heroes-kings like Jamshid, Faridun, Faranak, Zahhak, Garshasb, Sām were entangled with these two toponyms according to Persian texts. Clearly Japan appeared less frequently as a toponym in Persian classic texts. The author believes that believe “refraining to give support to Sasanian princes” should serve as a significant factor in dropping Japan’s name by Persian texts. In this article I will try to answer “why references to Japan are lacking in Persian classic texts?”

**Keywords:** Japan, Silla (Korea), China, Iran, Sasanian, Zoroastrianism.



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## Introduction

Relations between Iran and the East Asia date back to the ancient times. China, as a commonly attested toponym, has been a known territory in Persian texts from the Middle Persian to the New Persian periods.

However, archaeological evidence confirms the relations go back to the Parthian Period (Tao, 2007: 87), under Mithradates II. Also, Sasanian texts have referred to two different toponyms, China (Čīn) and Chinaštan (Čīn-ištān),<sup>1</sup> and in this period bilingual inscriptions begin to appear (An *et al.*, 1984: 94). In the Islamic periods, detailed information about China is even more common and is present in texts ranging from historical and geographical sources to the travelogues (See: Jayhani 1990: 36; Ibn Khordadbeh, 1991: 52 and *passim*).

Besides China, we interestingly find additional toponyms in those sources. The two toponyms highlighted in Persian classic texts; Silla (Korea) and Vāq Vāq<sup>2</sup> have been described as neighboring countries of Čīn. Meanwhile, Persian texts have preserved two meanings for the toponym Vāq Vāq; one of them is described to be in the East Asia and as a neighbor of Čīn; but the second has been described as a part of an area belonging to “black people”.<sup>3</sup>

This article does not deal with the geographical location of Vāq Vāq in the texts. The main question this article deals with: “Why has Japan (neighbor of China) appeared as a discolored and also dislocated toponym in Persian classic texts?” To answer the question historically, the author will first refer to descriptions about Japan and then compare them with those about Korea and China in the texts.

## Iran-Japan Historical relations

Although many scholarly works have been published on Iran-Japan historical relations, the author believes that some aspects of these relations need to be reviewed. Despite this, many works have been published on historical role of these two toponyms in cases where both are referenced (Iran and Japan), on the Shosoin treasury (Tōdaiji Temple in Nara), in the Nihon Shoki, and in the reference to a verse of Firdowsi or Vis-o-Ramin in the notebook of a Japanese by an Iranian (Kyōsei, 1189-1268; Morita, 2008: online). Meanwhile, it seems that the official diplomatic relations between the two sides date back to Qajar Period when Nāser-al-Din Shah received several Japanese delegations (Kondo 2012: online). Meanwhile, Silla (Korea) and China geographically were two important gates for Iranians to visit Japan in the past (Sugimura, 2008: online). Also, it is said that Iranian horses arrived in Japan through Korea.<sup>4</sup>

## Japan in Persian texts

Although the name China was known for the Middle Persian languages such as Sogdian, Manichean and Zoroastrian Pahlavi texts (Akbarzadeh, 2014: 29), those texts have never mentioned the name of Japan! However, Ayādgār Jāmāspīg, a late Zoroastrian Pahlavi

text, in the chapter on Čīneštān (Messina, 1939: 51) preserved interesting information. In the information, the text describes Čīneštān as the center of musk and gold. While it is hard to explain the term included Japan and Silla (in the text), but this information can be seen frequently in the Early Islamic Periods widely about Silla (Ibn Khordadbeh, 1991: 53, 146). Briefly, our first information in this regard (about the two toponyms) goes back to the early Islamic centuries. Furthermore, Sasanian archaeological evidences discovered in Japan cannot be helpful to suggest a mutual relation older than the collapse of the Sasanian Empire between the two sides. Shosoin treasury suggested as a gift (from remains of Sasanians from China) to Japanese government as well as a collection which arrived as private favorites (Mierse, 2017: 6). Against Japan, Sasanian objects from China and Silla are different. Many scholarly works have been published about Sasanian legacy from China since the last century (Rong, 2000: 7). Also, some objects from Gyeongju cannot be interpreted as gifts clearly. If they are many questions about arrival of the objects of Shosoin treasury to Japan but some of the objects of Gyeongju National Museum were created in Silla! Recently the author stressed on the loop housed at the Gyeongju National Museum (because color, form, pearl running, compound of the elements and place (reason and permission) of the installing...) and interpreted this wonderful Sasanian heritage from another view (neither gift nor imported object). Despite this, the author should refer to a figurine of a Persian messenger in Gyeongju National Museum (there is a kind of letter in his hands).

However, the following sources (Islamic periods) clearly refer to the Vāq Vāq toponym, located near Čīn:

Hodud-al-Alam (Anonymous 1962: 60, 19): “Vāq Vāq” is a district of Čīn. The traders of Čīneštān frequently visit Vāq Vāq...”

Jahan-nama (Najib-Bakran, 1962: 9, 92): “Silla and Vāq Vāq are located in the eastern part of Čīn. Vāq Vāq and Silla, in the eastern part of Čīn, are the centers of gold”.

Ibn Khordadbeh (Ibn Khordadbeh, 1991: 53-54.): “Vāq Vāq is located in east of Čīn”.

Eštakhri (Eštakhri, 1989: 109) in Massalik –al-Mamalik writes: “The Persian Gulf’s dimension<sup>5</sup> is from the Pacific Sea, near Čīn and Vāq Vāq, to India”.

Surah –al- Aqalim (Anonymous 1974): “The first location in south-east is the islands of Vāq Vāq; these islands are located on the pacific coast, with a length of 300 Farsang<sup>6</sup> and width of 200; and the water (sea) has penetrated into it (island) and made some other small seas and mountains and some islands in the water”.

Nokhbat –al- Dahr (Ansari, 2003: 232): “The Vāq Vāq islands are located in the pacific; Vāq Vāq is a kind of Chinese tree...”<sup>7</sup>

Furthermore, the following questionable report can be a part of the above sources: “The Great Iranian seaman, Bozorg Sharyar Ramhormozi in the Wonders of India narrates (Ramhormozi, 1970: 6-7, 40, 52, 139, 141-142): “One of the seamen has narrated to Abu Mohammed Hassan Ibn Amr: Once I sailed a ship to the Zabej (at present Java in Indonesia) island and the contrary winds rerouted our path and we arrived at the

Vāq Vāq islands. I heard that a man who visited the Vāq Vāq islands, described the increase of cities; but his description is not from the viewpoint of geography, but (that of) increase of population. People of this island are also like Turks group. They are very skillful at industry, crafts and arts and they are the mm sharp in these fields; they attempt strongly to train the artisans and they are strict in all works”.<sup>8</sup>

In the above-mentioned sources, Vāq Vāq not only has been described as a toponym located east of Čīn but also some texts have referred to it jointly with Silla. In fact, those texts described Vāq Vāq geographically.

Let me only refer to some selected descriptions about Silla in Persian texts and compare them with those of Japan. The term Silla has been surprisingly described in Persian texts with much admirable terms:

Taghwim –al- Buldan (Abolfada, 1970: 412- 417): “Silli is also called Silla and it is located in east of Čīn. Silla is a very flourishing Island”.

Al Massalik-al-Mamalik (Ibn Khordadbeh, 1991: 53, 146): “If a traveler arrives in farthest Chinese land (district) which is called Shila, he desires to settle down in Shila and never likes to leave there, where is the center of Gold. Each Moslem who arrives in lands far of Čīn where Shila- the center of Gold- is located, he wants to stay and does not like to leave Shila”.

Soleyman Tajer Sirafi, in Akhbar-al-Sīn wa l-hind (Sirafi, 2001: 169): “There are not any known countries alongside Chinese sea except the land that is called Silla [or] Shila and its islands. Iranians who visited the place remained there and did not go back because of excellent weather, excellent drinking water, excellent fresh earth and profusion of products...”

In Al-Tanbihyah-al-Ashraf (Masudi, 1971: 26):

“The eastern flourishing land is the farthest district of Čīn and it is Silli ...”.

Nokhbat-al-Dahr (Ansari, 2003: 213):

“Three islands of Silli, which are called Sella also. If someone arrives in these islands, desires to stay there, (live there and) forget other places”.

Jahan-nama (Najib-Bakran, 1964: 72, 92):

“There are many centers of gold and silver in the world. One of the most important centers of gold is Far China where one is Vāq Vāq and the other is Basilla (Ba/esīlā)<sup>9</sup> where a big center of gold is located and it is not necessary to obtain gold from stone. People of this land make the bridle of their dogs from gold. Basilla is the farthest part of Chinese lands, a part of which is located in sea and it is very flourishing and prosperous. If one arrives there, they never wish to return to their homeland”.

Mojmal-al-Tawarikh va-al-Qassas (Anonymous, 2005: 478-9, 481, 27): “Silla is a city (territory) of Chinese Balād (Chinese districts). Silla is the greatest city (land) due to having gold. The mother of Afridun is the daughter of king Basilla”.

Ajayeb-al-Makhlughat, by Ahmad Tusi (Tusi, 2003: 236): “Silla is a city (land) of Čīn. Whoever arrives in these islands, desires to stay there, he will not leave there”.

Ajaye-b-al-Makhlughat, by Mahmud-al-Makmuni-al-Ghazvini (Qazvini, 1983: 103): “Sella Island: It is a flourishing island and if a foreigner arrives in Sella, he will not desire to return to his homeland because Silla is a very prosperous land and it is the center of gold”.

Kush-nama: <sup>10</sup>

2241. On the fifth day they reached Basilla city, no one has seen a city like Basilla in the world.

2242. It was twelve km. long and the same size wide, full of gardens and the gardens full of jasmine.

2243. It was the center of King Taehur’s monarchy, <sup>11</sup> it was not a city but rather like a paradise full of angels.

According to the above references, Silla is “the best place for drinking water, center of gold, the best people of the world and a dreamy land”. Also, the texts used such terms for China. It is interesting that the “final savior” (of Zoroastrians of the early Islamic periods) will come from Čīn or Silla to Iran to rescue the country from the Arabs:

Bahram-e Warzāwand, a Zoroastrian Pahlavi short text, wished a savior would return to Iran from Hindugān<sup>12</sup> and save the country from the Arabs: “Thus, the Hyuns (Hephthalites) and Turks with numerous troops attack Iran-Shahr and they destroy the prosperous and perfumed Iran-Shahr and finally in this time a person appears from the direction of Kabulestan, with the Glory of Kings, by the name of “Kay Bahram”. All people may join him and he may govern all parts of the world, from Hindūgān, to Rome and Turkestan (Cereti, 1996: 630-635)”.

Also, Zarātusht-nama (Bahram-Pazhdu, 1959: 95-96) called for a savior from Indo-China territories to rescue Iran: “When destroyer Arabs will come, they will destroy Iran entirely

There is a (an Iranian) king in Hind and Čīn, from Kayan’s dynasty  
He will campaign to rescue Iran, with a big troop from Hind and Čīn  
He calls troops from Pars, Khorasan and Siṣṭan, a strong troop...  
Bahram, the king, will rescue the world from the evil...”

Garshasb-nama (Anonymous, 2014: 19-20): “Jamshid went to Hind through Siṣṭan. He visited Čīn through Hind. Zakhak captured him in Čīn”.

Kush-nama (1997: 75): <sup>13</sup>

931. Zakhak sent Kush to Čīn from the West, and gave him the East entirely

932. “Zakhak” told him: “Take complete vengeance on Jamshid’s survivors”

These two toponyms, Čīn and Silla, have been described like “promised lands, dreamy lands, Heaven” in the texts and it is impossible to find such terms or descriptions about Japan. Although, Čīn and Silla had been entangled with Zoroastrian heroes of the resurrection, like Jamshid, Feridun, Franak, Zakhak, Garshasb, Japan did not have any position in this regard. How can we account for this disparity?

## Diplomatic Migration to the East Asia and China, Silla and Japan

With the collapse of Sasanian Empire, the royal family of the last Sasanian king, Yazdgird, fled to China along with thousands of artisans, generals and musicians. This diplomatic migration prepared grounds for the creation of “Sino-Iranian art” according to Girshman (Girshman, 1971: 310-320). From this time, Iranian art strongly affected China and its neighboring countries. This forced diplomatic migration was a most significant step in relations between Iran and the East Asia, China, Silla and most probably Japan.

It is known that the Chinese Emperor Gaozong (of Tang Era), not only accepted Firuz, Yazdgird III’s son, as the legal king of Persia, and his accompanies but also supported him to launch several campaigns against the Arabs (Compareti 2009: online).

Early Chinese Tang Emperors supported Sasanian princes, Firuz, his brother, Bahram, and his son, Narsi, against the Arabs. However, the support to Iranians was cut most probably at a specific time. The situation changed after the An Lushan rebellion in 755-6 and, especially, with the edicts issued by the Taoist minister Li Mi (722-89) aimed to stop the monetary support granted to foreign nobles living at Chang’an. From this time, the fate of the Sasanian princes remains cloaked in the veil of ambiguity.

Kush-nama explains (1997: no. 2250 ff.) in detail how wandering Iranians in China asked for help from Taehur, the king of Silla. Taehur welcomed Iranians very warmly. This event can be seen in many Persian texts where Silla was highlighted properly.

Despite the texts, there are two important treasuries of containing Sasanian material in Japan (Shosoin) and in Korea (Gyeongju). Clearly both treasuries are important in understanding the historical relation with Iran. This importance can be inferred from the inscribed sandalwood in Pahlavi language in the Shosoin treasury. Typical Sasanian birds of a loop from Bunhwangsa Buddhist Temple, honeycomb glasses, lion scene (Gyeongju) in Korea are also interesting from an archaeological point of view. The date (of arrival) of Sasanian objects in Japan and some of them to Silla were not far apart. However, the shadow of Silla has affected Japan’s name in Persian texts. I mean Persian texts have highlighted Silla and not Japan. This highlighting of the Silla toponym can be interpreted as a “political issue”; that is connected to diplomatic migration of the Royal family to East Asia and most probably supported by China and Silla. Support from China and Korea for Sasanian princes can be seen as main reason that those countries were entangled with Zoroastrian resurrection; it also gives additional meaning to the elevated position of Čin and Silla in Persian texts. These two toponyms are combined with the Zoroastrian utopia, Kang-diz, in the post-Sasanian texts.

## Conclusion

The fall of the Sasanian Empire was a significant step in historical and artistic relations between Iran and the East Asia including China, Korea and Japan. Chinese and Persian texts have confirmed that Tang Emperors supported Firuz, Yazdgird’s son, and his brother (and maybe his son) to launch campaigns against the Arabs. A series of Persian

texts have similarly highlighted Silla as an important ally. According to the Persian texts, Čīn and Silla were two “holy toponyms” where the final (Zoroastrian) savior would come to rescue Iran from the Arabs. Surprisingly heroes-kings like Jamshid, Feridun, Faranak, Zahhak, Garshasb, Sām were entangled with these two toponyms according to Persian texts. This entanglement remained throughout later periods as a remnant of Zoroastrianism after the collapse of Sasanian Empire. Zoroastrians were waiting to one of the survivors of Yazdgird to return and rescue the country. They were clearly well aware about the diplomatic migration to the East Asia and their efforts for Iran against the Arabs.

The narrators were informed that Čīn and Silla supported Sasanian princes against the Arabs. So, these two toponyms were highlighted in Persian texts but those sources never referred to Japan.

If “political issue” cannot be seen as a significant reason of highlighted position of Silla in Persian texts (and insignificant of Japan), let me raise the following questions: Why Silla has been described as “center of the gold and silver” (while Korea has not such mines)? Why if a traveler arrived to Silla, he did not like to leave this “heaven” of the world? Also, why-according to *Mojmal-al-Tawarikh*, the mother of “Faridun” (key hero of Zoroastrian resurrection)-was a Sillian princess? Why Silla mingled with a sacred belief (ancient Iran)? If all these questions are weak, why in *Ajayeb-al-Makhlughat* of Qazvini<sup>14</sup> “portrait of Silla” is different from Japan, where Silla is the “symbol of civilized land” then others territories from India to eastern part of China?

However, the impartial policy of Japan can be the most important reason why Persian texts were silent about this country. This impartiality can be interpreted through geographical, political, economic, and military reasons or historical conflicts between Japan and China or Silla. The author cannot lay stress on a specific reason for such impartiality but I believe “refraining to give support to Sasanian princes” should serve as a significant factor in dropping Japan’s name by Persian texts.

## Endnote

1. China and Čīn-ištān, both, have been interpreted as proper country of China in scholarly works since last century (cf. Bailey 1979: 102; Boyce 1977: 33). Recently I (2020, 235) have drawn a significant line between the two terms. Also, see: Bailey (1979: 102) for the forms: Sogd. Ancient letters: čynštn; Armen. lw (from Persian): čen-k’, čenaštan; Zor. P. čēnik, čēnaštān; O.Ind. cīna-, mahācīna; Arb. Šīn, māšīn.

2. Pulleyblank (1991: 324, 116, 319) writes: “wa kwək” is reconstructed Middle Chinese pronunciation”. The “Vāq Vāq” is, according to his work, the modification of Mid. Chinese word of “Vāk vaku”, “the country of Vā”, or “Japan”; Also, for geographical location (see *Jahan-nama* 1962: 9).

3. Cf. Aburayhan Biruni (Bosworth 2012: 210): “The Island of Al-Wāwāk belongs to the Kumair Islands. They believe in religion of Hindus ... some of the inhabitants of the wāwāk islands have black skin”. Also, Morita, 2008: online.

4. Egami (1967) supposed that the horse arrived in Japan for the first time through Korea.

5. For the same dimension see: *Ashkal-al-Alam* by Jihani (1989: 114).

6. A Persian measure of distance, equivalent to about four miles.

7. Also, Taghwim-al-Buldan (Abolfada 1970: 415) referred to “Jamakut”: “Jamakut is located in the eastern part (of the eastern China/ Sea/ climate)”.

8. The last part of the report can remind us of a narration by Āyātgar i Žāmāspik (Messina 1939: 50-52) about

čīnēstān where the text exactly refers to such information (on cities and skills).

9. Silla's name has been preserved as Basilla in the text and many other Persian texts (cf. Kush-nama). I interpreted the term Basilla as: Beh>beh (better) and Silla like: Weh-Ohrmozd, Weh-shahpuhr (Sasanian period) and in New Persian like Beh-shahr (Mazandaran)... (Akbarzadeh and Lee 2018: 55).

10. Iranshan ibn Abal-khayr (Matini 1997); Rajab-zadeh (2002: 65-71, 82) confused Kush-nama with Japan (he supposed that Basilla of the text reflects Japan!) regardless of the origin of Iranian mythology (since Avesta to Zor. Pahlavi texts), new changes, social and political impacts such as diplomatic migration of the Royal family to China or Parsi migration to India, information on ancient and middle Persian languages, regardless of linguistics features like semantic and philology, missing other Arabo-Persian texts such as Mojmal-al-Tawarikh and without any reference to archaeological evidences and Sasanian art history.... Mašter Matini- due to Rajab-zadeh's recommendations- did the same mistakes (1990: 160-177; KN, 1997: introduction)!

11. The name of Silla's king means "aristocrat" in Korean language. It should originally be a Chinese term.

12. It does not mean "India".

13. In numerous lectures (in Korea and China) and several articles, I (2008: 7; 2010: 139) have dealt with the geographical displacement of specific myths i.e. Jamshid, Faridun, Garshasb... from Iran to China and Silla. I have noted that as a result of "political migration" (Yazdgird's family), the myths have shifted to the Far East. Expecting the return of one of the Sasanian remains from China-Silla to rescue Iran from the Arabs can be understandable from the late Zoroastrian Pahlavi texts to Islamic era (Cereti 1996, 629). It means historical events were narrated under an epic-mythical format which was normal in ancient Iran i.e. Khodāy-nāmag and Shah-nama (Daryae 2009: 113). Already I (2014: 35) supposed that it seems the Fall of Sasanian (historic event) was equal to the fall of the world (resurrection: mythical) for Zoroastrians. This is a reason why Zoroastrian heroes (who are entangled with resurrection) appeared in China and Silla, not Japan. In the introduction of KN, the poet mentioned "I want to narrate a tale of a Chinese king from an old source". As I (2015: 8) previously wrote that it means "the tale of an Iranian prince/king in China" because Persian texts never deal on Chinese kings in a large scale; cf. 990- 5000 verses.

14. Manuscript is online: National Library and Archives of Iran: Ajayeb-al-Makhlughat Qazvini by M. N. Khansari (1904: 65); Also, Sabuhi (undated: 102) published the white and black version of the manuscript in Tehran.

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# چرایی نبود جایگاهمندی ژاپن در متون کلاسیک فارسی در سنجش با موقعیت درخشان چین و سیلا

داریوش اکبرزاده<sup>1</sup>

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## چکیده

پیوندهای تاریخی ایران و شرق دور، به‌ویژه با چین به روزگار کهن سال برمی‌گردد. سواى پیوندهای تاریخی و بازرگانی شناخته شده، فروپاشی شاهنشاهی ساسانی، بهانه تغییر معنادر موقعیت سه سرزمین چین، سیلا و ژاپن در متون فارسی، به‌ویژه منابع پساساسانی شده است. با فروپاشی شاهنشاهی ساسانی و پناهندگی «پیروز»، فرزند «یزدگرد سوم»، به همراه همراهان و هزاران هنرمند به دربار تانگ، فصلی متفاوت در پیوندهای ایران و شرق دور گشوده شد. امپراتوران تانگ در چین، پیروز را به‌عنوان شاه قانونی پارس پذیرفتند و بسی حمایت کردند؛ این حمایت تا فروپاشی دودمان تانگ ادامه یافت؛ با فروپاشی شاهنشاهی تانگ، موقعیت بازماندگان ساسانیان از دست رفت و بسیاری از آنان قتل عام شدند؛ در چنین شرایط وخیمی، آنان دست یاری به‌سوی دو سرزمین هم‌مرز، یعنی سیلا و ژاپن دراز کردند؛ متون فارسی بسیار گسترده و معنادار بر روی سیلا تمرکز کرده‌اند؛ نامیدن بسیلا به‌جای سیلا در متون فارسی نیز بسی معنادار است؛ ژاپن، در سنجش با دو نام کرانمند چین و سیلا، هیچ رنگ و بویی در متون فارسی ندارد؛ گویی ایرانیان نمک‌شناس با کرانمندسازی جایگاه دو سرزمین چین و سیلا، قدرشناسی خود را بدین‌گونه نشان داده‌اند؛ آنجا که این دو سرزمین استوارانه با باورهای دینی زرتشتی، از جمله «پیدایی نجات‌بخشان فرجامین جهان» درهم آمیخته‌اند.

**کلیدواژگان:** چین، سیلا، ژاپن، دوره ساسانی، متون فارسی.



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## مقدمه

پیوندهای تاریخی ایران و چین به روزگار باستان به دوره «مهرداد دوم» اشکانی بازمی‌گردد. با وجود این، پیوندهای دو سویه ایران و چین به دوره ساسانی و به‌ویژه به سده ششم میلادی به اوج خود رسید. افزون‌تر، فروپاشی شاهنشاهی ساسانی، مهاجرت سیاسی دودمان شاهی به چین، سرفصلی ارجمند در پیوندهای دو سویه سیاسی، هنری، فرهنگی، نظامی و... میان ایران و چین و سپس سرزمین‌های همجوار شد. «پیروز» فرزند «یزدگرد» به همراه دودمان شاهی و هزاران نوازنده، رقص، هنرمند، ارتشبدان با تجربه به سوی «چانگ آن»، پایتخت «تانگ» رفت. پستی بی‌مانند امپراتوران تانگ، به‌ویژه «گائوزنگ» (و شهبانو «وو زوتیان»)) از شاهزادگان ساسانی در نبرد با تازیگان چنان بر جان و دل ایرانیان میهن پرست شیرین افتاد که بخش بزرگی از یادگارنوشته‌های متأخر ساسانی تا به فارسی کلاسیک را تحت تأثیر قرار خود داد. میراث مادی و معنوی ایران زمین، به‌ویژه میراث ایران ساسانی و سغدیان هنرپرور در چین قابل سنجش با هیچ کشوری دیگر نیست؛ میراث ساسانی-سغدی در «شین جیانگ، غارهای دون هوانگ، چانگ آن (شیان)، موزه ملی ابریشم (هانگژو)، موزه تاریخ شهر شیان» و بسیار گواه این ادعا است. آشکارا، با شورش «آن لوشان» و فروپاشی شاهنشاهی تانگ، سرنوشت شاهزادگان و ساسانیان چین نشین دگرگون شد؛ از یک سو، راه بازگشت به ایران به بهانه حضور تازیان اشغالگر بسته شده بود و از سوی دیگر، شرایط سیاسی-اجتماعی چین بی‌رحم شده بود. این رخداد دردناک در چین، کمترین بهانه‌ای است که ناگهان با نام سرزمین سیلا (کره) در متون فارسی روبه‌رو می‌شویم. داده‌های درهم‌تنیده با این دو سرزمین در یادگارنوشته‌های فارسی، از دو دید داده‌های «تاریخی-جغرافیایی» و «باوری» با هم متفاوت هستند. این تفاوت داده‌ای هرگز در مورد کشور ژاپن، درست نمی‌افتد؛ از این روی، نگارنده در این پژوهش بدین پرسش پاسخ خواهد داد که، چرا جایگاه لرزان و کم‌رنگ ژاپن هرگز قابل سنجش با جایگاه ارجمند چین و سیلا (کره) در متون فارسی نیست. بی‌گمان این تفاوت، نیازمند دلایل تاریخی است.

## بحث و تحلیل

چین در متون فارسی نماد اقلیم شرق دور و دروازه پیوند با دیگر سرزمین‌های هم‌جوار بوده است. نام این سرزمین به شکل «چین»، «چینستان» (قس. متون دوره میانه؛ هم‌چنین ن. ک. به: Akbarzadeh, 2020: 235) در متون فارسی برجای مانده است. برخلاف موقعیت و جایگاه معنادار چین در متون پیش‌تازیگانی تا به دوران پساساسانی، دو سرزمین هم‌جوار آن، یعنی «سیلا» (کره) و «ژاپن» تنها در متون کلاسیک زبان فارسی قابل فهم می‌آیند. «سیلا یا سیلا» نامی است که در متون تاریخی، جغرافیایی و حماسی برای سرزمین کره به کار رفته است. کشور ژاپن نیز با نام «چینی میانه» یعنی «واق واق»<sup>۱</sup> در متون فارسی توصیف شده است.

در متون فارسی چون: حدود العالم (ستوده، ۱۳۶۲: ۶۰)، المسالک الممالک «خردادبه» (۱۳۷۰: ۵۴-۵۳)، «استخری» (۱۳۶۷: ۱۰۹)، سفرنامه «ابوزیدسیرافی» (۱۳۸۰: ۱۶۹)، تقویم البلدان (۱۳۴۸: ۴۱۲)، نخبة الدهر (۱۳۸۱: ۲۳۲)، عجایب المخلوقات (۱۳۸۱: ۲۳۶)، مجمل التواریخ (۱۳۸۹: ۲۷)، کوش نامه (۱۳۷۷: ش. ۲۲۴۱)، جهان نامه (۱۳۴۲: ۷۲) و بسیاری درباره موقعیت دو سرزمین سیلا و واق واق سخن رفته است؛ بنابراین در متون، واق واق و سیلا، دو سرزمین همسایه چین و گاهی نیز بخشی از سرزمین چین به توصیف آمده‌اند.

۱. موضوع بحث این پژوهش، واق واق توصیف شده در کران آفریقا نیست. نگارنده به‌خوبی به گزارش دو گانه موقعیت واق واق در برخی متون آگاه است؛ موضوع بحث این پژوهش، واق واق، سرزمین همسایه چین و سیلا است.

## چین

**الف) متون تاریخی جغرافیایی (نمونه):** «مسعودی» (۱۳۸۹: ۲۰، ۶۵) می‌نویسد: «حد اقلیم‌ها از مشرق از دیار چین آغاز می‌شود... دریای محیط در مجاورت زابج و جزایر مهراج و شلاهط و هرلج به دریای چین می‌پیوندد».

**ب) متون زرتشتی یا متأثر از روایت‌های زرتشتی (نمونه):** زرتشت‌نامه (دبیرسیاقی، ۱۳۳۸: ۹۶) می‌فرماید:

یکی شاه باشد به هند و به چین  
ز تخم کیان اندر آن وقت کین  
مر او را یکی پور شایسته کام  
نهاده بر آن پور بهرام نام  
نشان آن‌که چون آید اندر جهان  
ستاره فرو بارد از آسمان

افزون‌تر، با شماری متون پس‌اساسانی در پیوند ایران و چین روبه‌رو هستیم که در آن قهرمانان اساطیری زرتشتی نقش‌آفرینان هستند؛ این قهرمانان همگی در آخرت زرتشتی کلیدی هستند؛ در: گرشاسب‌نامه، «گرشاسب»، فرامرزن‌نامه، «فرامرز» و سام‌نامه، «سام» و هم‌چنین «جمشید»، همگی از سیستان به چین رفته و در آنجا دل‌باخته ماهرویی چینی می‌شوند. بی‌گمان نقش‌آفرینی چین در لشکرکشی «پیروز» به ایران و ایستایی در برابر تازیان در سیستان به مدت دو سال می‌تواند بهانه درهم‌تنیدگی سیستان و قهرمانان سیستانی زرتشتی با چین و چینستان باشد.

## سیلا

**الف) متون تاریخی جغرافیایی (نمونه):** جهان‌نامه (نجیب بکران، ۱۳۴۱: ۹، ۱۹): «از جانب مشرق شهرهای چین است، بسیلا و بلاد واق‌واق... در اقصای مشرق دریایی است که آن را بحر مظلم خوانند، این بحر بر ظهر شهرهای بسیلا و واق‌واق بکشد...».

**ب) در متون فارسی متأثر از روایت‌های زرتشتی و سنت متأخر ساسانی:** در متون فارسی متأثر از روایت‌های زرتشتی و سنت متأخر ساسانی، سیلا بسان بهشتی رویایی، کان زر و سیم، با گواراترین آب و با بهترین مردمان توصیف شده است؛ با وجود این، بس پیداست که کشور کره فاقد کان زر و سیم و چنان آب گوارایی با توجه به موقعیت خود است.  
- کوش‌نامه (۱۳۷۷: ۳۵۸، ۴۵۳):

یکی شهریار آید از ما پدید  
که تختش زمین کم تواند کشید (آبتین به شاه سیلا)  
ز جادو کند پاک روی زمین  
شود روشن از تیغ او کار دین  
دل شاه طیهور خرسند کرد  
لبش را بدین داستان بند کرد  
تو (شاه سیلا) امروز فرخ نیای منی (فریدون)  
به ماچین و خاور بجای منی  
تو باید که پیوسته داری به راه  
فرستاده‌ای یک‌دل و نیکخواه  
که پیوسته آرد مرا آگهی  
از آن نامور بارگاه مهی

- مجمل‌التواریخ (ناشناس ۱۳۸۹: ۲۷): «فریدون بن اثفیان بن همایون بن جمشید الملک، مادرش فری رنگ، دختر طهور<sup>۲</sup> ملک جزیره بسلا ماچین بود».

### واقواق (ژاپن)

د مورد این سرزمین جز داده‌های جغرافیایی، هیچ درهم‌تنیدگی با سنت‌های زرتشتی یا باورهای ایران باستان نمی‌توان یافت!

افزون‌تر، نگارنده باید یادآوری نماید که درهم‌تنیدگی چین و سیلا با کنگدز زرتشتی، به یاری نقشه‌ای از «حافظ ابرو» در کاخ گلستان به خوبی قابل فهم می‌آید (اکبرزاده، ۲۰۲۵: زیرچاپ). واقعیت این است که برای درهم‌تنیدگی چین و سیلا با باورهای دینی زرتشتی باید به دنبال یک بهانه بود؛ به باور نگارنده، کلیدی‌ترین «قداست چین و سیلا» در یادگارنوشته‌های پس‌اساسانی به حمایت و پشتی شاهنشاهی تانگ و سپس آغوش گرم شاهنشاهی سیلا، پساتانگ، بر روی بازماندگان ساسانیان در آن کران برمی‌گردد؛ موضوعی که که درباره ژاپن از راه هیچ متنی گواهی نشده است.

### نتیجه‌گیری

واقعیت این است که فروپاشی شاهنشاهی ساسانی و مهاجرت سیاسی دودمان شاهی به همراه بسیاری از بزرگان کشوری به کشور چین سرچشمه تغییرات معنادار در زبان فارسی شده است. یکی از این تغییرات معنادار، جابه‌جایی جغرافیای برخی باورها و اساطیر زرتشتی از خراسان بزرگ به چین است؛ رهایی بخشان فرجامین دین زرتشتی چون «فریدون» از چین-سیلا به سوی نجات ایران حرکت می‌کنند؛ چین بسان بهشت زرتشتی، با آخرت ایرانیان باستان گره می‌خورد؛ جمشید، نماد شاهی فرهنگ، در چین غروب می‌کند. این تغییرات معنادار ریشه در همان مهاجرت سیاسی دارد؛ یعنی زمانی که چین به ساسانیان سرگردان پناه داد، لشکر داد، مقام داد و آن‌ها را در برابر تازیگان پشتی و در انجام باورهای دینی آزادی داد؛ از این روی، در باورهای دینی زرتشتی با جغرافیای جدیدی به نام چین روبه‌رو می‌شویم؛ با فروپاشی شاهنشاهی تانگ، ایرانیان بدون پناه، از شاهنشاهی سیلا و به گمان بسیار از سرزمین واقواق (ژاپن) نیز یاری خواستند؛ آن‌چنان‌که از متون فهمیده می‌شود، تنها سرزمین سیلا بدین درخواست پاسخ مثبت داد؛ به گمانی، تغییر معنادار نام سیلا به شکل «بسیلا» (به+ سیلا: سیلای خوب) و درهم‌تنیدگی آن با اساطیر زرتشتی کمترین پرتو آن پشتی تاریخی است. ایرانیان نمک‌شناس، این دو سرزمین را به عنوان دو سرزمین مینوی و رهایی‌بخش خود باور کردند؛ ژاپن، به هر دلیل سیاسی، اقتصادی، اجتماعی، مشکلات مرزی، به ایرانیان لطفی نکرد؛ از این روی، دو همسایه این کشور با باورهای زرتشتی گره خوردند، حال آن‌که داده‌های تاریخی-جغرافیایی هم در مورد این سرزمین (ژاپن) کم‌رنگ، پرسش برانگیز، مبهم و فاقد ارزش بررسی است.

۲. «طهور» یا «طیهور» واژه‌ای چینی که در مفهوم کلی «اشراف‌زاده»، «شاه» (قس. فغفور، خسرو، قیصر) و در اصل به معنای «مادر شاه» را معنی می‌دهد؛ این نام به فراوانی به عنوان اسم خاص شاه سیلا در کوش‌نامه به کار رفته است (Taehur). نگارنده پیشتر و کافی در این مورد نوشته است (Akbarzadeh, 2015: 12).