

‘FROM THE FAROE ISLANDS TO THE OKI ISLANDS’

フェロー諸島
隠岐諸島

Presentation at the 28th European Association of Japanese Resource Specialists (EAJRS) Conference ‘Digital Strategies for Japanese Studies: Theories and Practices’

University of Oslo, Norway, 13-16 Sept. 2017

Firouz GAINI – University of the Faroe Islands – firouzg@setur.fo

It is my hope that this presentation, illustrating some facets of Faroese/Japanese relations, with focus on my own ethnographic project from a Japanese island community, can, as proposed in the EAJRS Charter (October 1989), foster “the development and dissemination of information [...] on Japan in Europe”. My aim is, so to speak, to bring EAJRS’ mission to a semi-independent country in the North Atlantic Ocean, which historically has had quite limited interest in and contact with Japan.



Few days ago, just before I left the Faroe Islands, the influential ‘Trade and Industry Committee of the Faroese Parliament’ returned home from a week-long visit to Japan, which had been organized with the overall aim of establishing closer ties between the two countries.



Taiji and Klaksvík, says the *Japan Times* (10 August 2017) in a news release, “are the only communities in the world that practice the controversial drive-hunting of cetaceans”. This is slightly incorrect, because this kind of whale hunting is actually common all over the Faroe Islands, not only in Klaksvík.



**Sigrun Gunnarsdóttir,
Exhibition in Japan**



Tadahito Iko and Poul Michelsen

**Gift: sweater from Guðrun & Guðrun,
Faroe Islands**





Manga - with Faroese motives



UNIVERSITY OF
THE FAROE ISLANDS

Oki Islands

Part of Shimane Prefecture, Japan

Total area of 346 km²

Approx. 24.000 inhabitants (2011)

Four main municipalities:

Okinoshima-chō (Okinoshima-town)

Chibu-son (Chibu-village)

Ama-chō (Ama-town)

Nishinoshima-chō (Nishinosh.-town)

Oki Islands

Nishinoshima Island
Nishinoshima Town



Nakanoshima Island
Ama Town

Chiburijima Island
Chibu Village

Dōzen Islands



FAROE ISLANDS



OKI ISLANDS



UNIVERSITY OF
THE FAROE ISLANDS

©Firouz GAINI2017

The Faroese are descendants of Vikings from Western Norway who settled the Faroe Islands in the Ninth century.

The Faroese lived in towns and small village communities spread out on seventeen of the eighteen islands comprising archipelago until the modern era.





Oki Dozen Senior High School, Ama-Town



**‘The Oki Islands, some forty-five miles from the mainland of Hoki Province, were for centuries the scene of strife, of sorrow, and of banishment, but today they are fairly prosperous and highly peaceful [...] They are a weird, wild and rocky group, difficult to access, and few indeed are the Europeans who have visited them’
(Smith 1918)**



An island can be both paradise and prison, both heaven and hell. An island is a contradiction between openness and closure, between roots and routes, which islanders must continually negotiate (Baldacchino 2007: 165)



FAROE ISLANDS



OKI ISLANDS



UNIVERSITY OF
THE FAROE ISLANDS

**‘[G]azing around at the forested hillsides glistening in the soft morning sunshine, I couldn’t help feeling that, as banishings go, this wouldn’t have been such a terrible punishment’
(Powell 2013)**

**Sun-dried fish,
Nishinoshima**



UNIVERSITY OF
THE FAROE ISLANDS

Faroe Islands

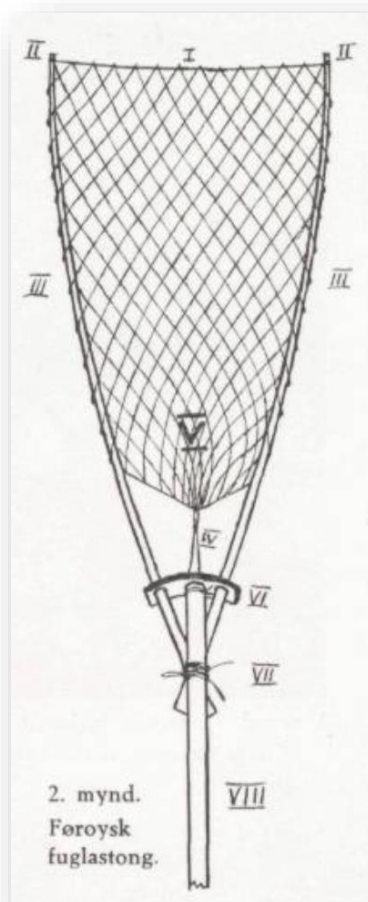


Oki Islands



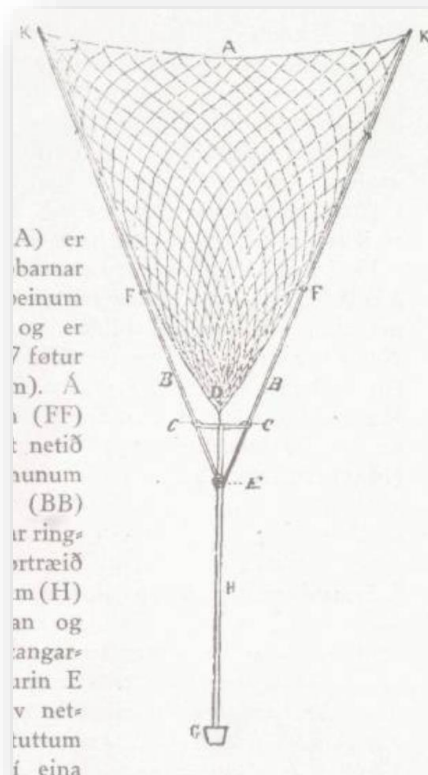
Robert Joensen
Fróðskaparrit 1963

Faroese Fowler's Pole



Robert Joensen
Fróðskaparrit 1963

Japanese Fowler's Pole



3. mynd. Japanska fuglastongin.
(Eftir Vendsyssels Tidende 1961)

Skyldskapurin ímillum føroysku og japonsku fuglastong-
ina er nógv størri enn tað, sum brýtur av. Eftir mínum
tykki er tað at undrast á, hvussu nær hesi amboð eru
skyld – so fjart frá hvørjum øðrum á heimsknøttinum.



Thank You



UNIVERSITY OF
THE FAROE ISLANDS