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SHAO
sailing for haiku across oceans

Also, see our first mission —
[Haiku Sailing Campaign Japan](#)

NPO Prospectus
SHAO: “Sailing for Haiku Across Oceans”
Richard Gilbert, Kumamoto University
<http://sailing-across-oceans.org>



“**Stella Aurore**” moored on Kami-Amakusa, Kumamoto, with SHAO
Director and Skipper Richard Gilbert aboard.

SHAO: Sailing for Haiku Across Oceans

Surrounded by the boundless expanse of the sea —for Japan, a country composed of islands, voyaging has from ancient times possessed a role of great societal importance. The poetic form of haiku has, as well, had a strong foundation in Japan, and has become known throughout the world as a traditional artistic form. Haiku, as represented by the *haiku pilgrimage*, seen in Basho's *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, and more recently in Santōka's wandering life, has been a vehicle through which over time human society has searched for poetic expression. Now imagine if such a pilgrimage were to take place not on foot, but through the increased

freedom of travel by sailboat — how might the face of modern haiku culture be changed?

SHAO seeks to sail the oceans for haiku. Our NPO endeavors to support voyaging by yacht for the purpose of facilitating literary discussion, in order to promote understanding between cultures, and through creating social-literary networks to provide charitable international support. Voyages planned in the spirit of the “haiku pilgrimage”: our mission is to seek out contemporary poets of all genres, bearers and sustainers of poetic culture, rooted in local regions.

SHAO NPO: Purpose

- 1) Establishing cross-cultural contacts and dialogue through the medium of literature.
- 2) Introducing to the wider world and creating visibility for generally unknown authors, poets and writers, notable in their country or region.
- 3) Discovering and learning about new aspects of the target culture, its history, arts and locales.
- 4) Discovering and learning of local needs, especially those related to education.
- 5) Networking via cultural, artistic and cross-cultural connections person-to-person, writer to writer — rather than via institutions or governments.
- 6) Development of long-term international networks and partnerships.
- 7) Through the above-outlined process, our goal is the promotion of aid and charitable giving based on cross-cultural understanding and appreciation.

For SHAO to achieve its proposed goals through voyages of “haiku pilgrimage,” a novel fusion of sailing and literature will form the basis of new social networks, to facilitate intercultural exchange and international support.

Our voyages by sail offer historical perspective — from those early sailing canoes of Jomon-era Japan, in continuity with modern technology. We will visit various lands, beginning with a circumnavigation of Japan, offering our sailboat as a place for haiku gatherings and shared experiences of the natural world, and conducting cultural-poetic exchange with local notable poets and friends.

In interacting with a culture of notable poets and engaging in poetic activities, utilizing the medium of English as a language of international communication and the technology of the Internet (video, blog, social networks), we plan to provide an international audience the drama of the history and culture of those places visited during the haiku pilgrimage, and bring to life the experience of journey by sail.

From the perceptions gained from such social exchange, it may be possible to identify needs in various locales for cultural-educational activity, making full use of the human network and technology that emerges.

SHAO NPO: Activities

- 1) Utilizing the research vessel as a base for actual haiku pilgrimage as well as practical training for students; maintaining the expedition vessel (sailboat) as a mobile “command and control” base of operations.

- 2) Undertaking of fundraising operations for the continuation of the project to promote SHAO NPO activities.
- 3) Planning and executing challenging, adventurous projects that vividly depict the power, intimacy and vastness of the natural world.
- 4) Technologically and administratively supporting navigation and voyage by sail.
- 5) Achieving a deeper understanding of the works of notable poets met during the voyages of haiku pilgrimage: sharing short verse and haiku among poets and crew members; preparing and supporting at-sea poetry gatherings (*kukai*) and day trips aimed at poetic inspiration (*ginko*), as well as interviews and symposia.
- 6) Through this adventure, creating a web presence which attracts, through this adventure, a wider audience, which may provide further contacts and support for giving aid to those in need.
- 7) Establishing a strong online presence through the use of blogs (video, pictures, text) and social networks.
- 8) Translating author interviews and poetry into English, for an international audience.
- 9) Providing compensation for interpretation and translation, in order to make possible the transmission of social environments with real-time immediacy to an international audience.
- 10) Directly supporting those in need through connections with potential donors: NGO groups, appropriate-technology groups, and direct giving for items such as textbooks, school supplies, etc.
- 11) Reporting on cultural, educational and charitable activities through additional media-forms of journalism.

For SHAO to realize its goals, a comprehensive nonprofit organization was established in 2013. Our first mission is an “around-Japan haiku pilgrimage voyage,” with vessel refitting beginning this year and planned to continue over the coming year (see the separate “mission statement” for further details). Our mission requires a proper vessel. As part of the preparation, SHAO has acquired a 1989 Jeanneau Sun-Rise 35, christened *Stella Aurore*, an offshore-capable cruiser, capable of short-handed and lighter-wind sailing. It is in good condition. At present, we are seeking charitable donations for the outfitting of this vessel. Over a longer time frame, following the completion of the Japan circumnavigation, the broader vision of SHAO includes plans to sail to destinations in Asia and Oceania. At present, The Philippines, with its deep historical-cultural ties to Japan, has emerged as a potential first candidate.

The unique aspect of the SHAO haiku pilgrimage involves the act of setting out in a sailing vessel for “literature,” while experiencing the adventure of “voyage.” In the quest for and discovery of notable non-English language poets and their works, interviews will be conducted, translations completed, and oceans crossed, to promote broader international concern and interest. Beyond these immediate fruits, our work

hopes to engender novel philosophical theses addressing issues fundamental to those of us living in urban-commercial environments, as an added bonus.

SHAO Vision: Key Concepts

- ♣ **Ocean.** To develop a deeper sense of the ocean environment; to provide an experience of the timelessness of the ocean, and to portray it literarily, socially, scientifically and spiritually.
- ♣ **Literary Adventure.** To present the seeking of literature as an adventure, thus attracting the interest of a wider international audience.
- ♣ **The Sharing of Adventure.** To communicate the excitement of the “analogue” experience of the ocean through digital means: presenting the adventure of ocean sailing, via video and text.
- ♣ **Technological Fusion.** To utilize an ancient, ecological mode of transportation, while also demonstrating effective, applicable new technologies, such as wind, solar, battery, materials technologies, software, etc.
- ♣ **Place of Participation.** Aimed at a younger generation, including university students, to offer opportunities for intellectual stimulation afforded by experiences apart from the everyday, along with fieldwork.
- ♣ **Creative Space.** SHAO: supporting the poetic, literary, artistic, and social activities of participants and supporters.

Thank you for your interest,
Richard Gilbert

Kumamoto University
March 1, 2015

To Support our NPO

**For PayPal instructions, please contact Richard Gilbert, SHAO
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Checks may be mailed to:

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**Please email SHAO at:
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For further information, including participation & sponsorship.**