



SHAO
sailing for haiku across oceans



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

A Haiku Sailing Pilgrimage — Circumnavigation of Japan

September 2015—September 2016

Précis

Sailing is one of the most ancient and ecological of human arts. Even today, people around the world can feel the romance of the sea. The world's oceans cover 4/5^{ths} of our planet and from the deck of a sailing ship the sky above and rolling waves to the horizon unite us in place, space and time. Approaching the coast of Japan, our starting point draws upon this sense of ancient time, and place. Gradually, as we sail closer, the unique, timeless beauty of Japan becomes evident. Our goal is to share the contemporary literary culture of Japan with the rest of the world, through the medium of English—from ports of call both large and small, cosmopolitan and local.

Our Mission:

TRAVEL. In our research vessel “Intuition,” to visit large and small ports (marinas and local fishing ports), following the coastline, beginning in Kyushu (from Hinagu, favored by Santōka), voyaging around Northwest Kyushu, and then north along the western coast of Honshū, visiting sites frequented by poets such as Bashō, Santōka and Hosai. After spending the summer typhoon season in the north (Aomori area and Hokkaido ports), circumnavigating Honshu to its eastern coast, our return journey stops at many of Basho’s pilgrimage spots. Important waypoints include Matsushima (near Sendai), and a visit to Basho’s most-northern pilgrimage point of Hiraizumi (in *Narrow Road to the Deep North*). We then continue south from the Sendai area to Tokyo, Shōdoshima (where Hosai lived), the Kobe/Osaka area (birthplace of postwar modern haiku), Matsuyama, Shikoku, and Hiroshima. As we make port at each location, beginning in Kyushu, and voyaging through Honshu, Hokkaido, and the western coast of Shikoku, our yacht becomes the center-point of meetings with *gendaihaiku* (modern Japanese haiku) poets and circles, where we can share and translate poetry, engage in discussion, and also explore local sites of beauty and cultural interest.

Sailing is an “analogue” process. In contrast to the speed of daily life, sailing allows us to slow down, to become more strongly aware of season and weather. We do not need a rigidly set schedule, as we can remain at a given port of call for the length of time necessary to complete meetings and translation tasks. Our sailboat will be our home and kitchen, providing space for gatherings, as well as comfortable living.

1) **GUESTS, VISITS & SAILING.** Our yacht will provide a comfortable place to talk and to share meals and drink, in a convivial manner. We wish to convey the appealing image of convivial social events happening aboard—haiku parties, readings, etc., linked at times with simultaneous events on land. As well, there is a private stateroom provided for guests (including international guests) who can live aboard for stages of the voyage. Day-sailing is always possible, in the form of a “*gingko*” (haiku walk) for the purpose of inspiration and composition. We wish to offer poets and artists a taste of the sea and views of nature and Japan from ecological perspectives both inspiring and re-energizing.

2) **TRANSLATION.** Meetings with noted *gendaihaiku* poets, their friends and colleagues, are organized well ahead of time as part of “mission preparation.” In every case, one or more English-language interpreters are included, so that meetings and discussions can be easily and quickly presented (uploaded) to an international audience, after editing. As well, haiku will be translated and published online, though following a more careful translation process. An additional goal of our pilgrimage is to document the sailing culture of Japan, from the outrigger canoe of the Jomon period, onward. We wish to publish an illustrated sailing log documenting the many ports of call available to smaller yachts, and share the sailing culture of Japan—including encounters with sailors, harbormasters, riggers, and others—to an international audience.

3) **TECHNOLOGY.** Our yacht is ecological. It utilizes wind and solar power, and carries laptop computers, video and audio equipment. Wi-Fi is available so that meetings and poetry can be published online, to the “Haiku Sailing Pilgrimage” website. Our website is interactive—we actively seek participation from international visitors. The website will include sections such as a “sailing blog,” “diary,” “haiku poetry in translation,” “visitor comments,” “visitor questions,” “photo gallery,” and a “donation page.” Especially, we wish to portray all those we meet and who help us along the way.

4) **YACHT.** Our mission requires a proper vessel. We have acquired a 1989 Jeanneau Sun-Rise 35, an offshore-capable cruiser, capable of short-handed and lighter-wind sailing. It is in good condition. Outfitting is our first main goal, to be completed by September, 2015. An estimated cost for preparation, with much of the labor done by our team, is approximately \$6K for a solar system, 3G radar, and maintenance. We are seeking funding to support this phase of the mission plan, and sponsorship is also welcomed.

5) **FUNDING.** Finances are an important aspect of the mission. Outfitting expenses will be supported by private funds and donation. For the 2015-2016 mission we will implement an international funding approach, via invitation to the (international) haiku world, the sailing community in Japan, and via socially networked crowd-source funding” (“Kickstarter” and “Indiegogo”). By seeking both international and Japanese haiku-community giving, we hope to invite further interest and participation in our journey and mission. We believe this combined approach to fundraising can generate positive media attention and coverage, and expect to raise international public awareness of *gendaihaiku* artists and poetic culture. Our mission-funding goals will take place in two phases. Our goal for outfitting (over the year 2015) is \$6,000.USD. In phase two, for the year-long voyage in 2016, our "golden" funding goal is \$4,000.USD to cover travel and yacht-maintenance costs.

6) **BACKGROUND.** “A Haiku Sailing Pilgrimage around Japan” is the vision of Associate Professor Richard Gilbert, Ph.D., Kumamoto University, Faculty of Letters, an international figure in the promotion of modern Japanese and English-language haiku. This pilgrimage occurs during his sabbatical year. Making his home in Kumamoto, Dr. Gilbert has published numerous books and articles on haiku over the last two decades. As an American, he grew up on the Connecticut shore sailing in cruising yachts and participating in small-craft racing on Long Island Sound. He is also a Scuba Divemaster. He currently sails in the Kyushu area with members of the Yatsushiro and Kumamoto Yacht Clubs. “A Haiku Sailing Pilgrimage around Japan” is inspired by the haiku journeys of Bashō and Issa, and also by contemporary figures, such as Santoka, the recent works of Arashiyama-sensei, and those who have sought to discover historical and contemporary cultural treasures through meetings with noted contemporary artists in local settings.

7) **PUBLICATIONS.** An important mission-goal is the publication of an anthology of poets and their works, to include poets met along the

way. Electronic (eBook) publication as well as print publications will include photographs and poet-biographies. A voyager's narrative will be another important publication, set loosely in the style of historical sailing narratives such as those by Richard Henry Dana, Jr. and Joshua Slocum. As above mentioned, interactive Internet/website publication will occur throughout the mission. One of the main goals of publication in a variety of media formats is to reach a younger audience — those who would not normally encounter haiku, in English. Many modern-haiku poets (*gendaihaijin*) heretofore unknown outside Japan will also be introduced to an international audience: this is an integral goal of our mission.

Contact & Networking

Please contact Dr. Gilbert (shao@sailing-across-oceans.org) for participation in the “Sailing Pilgrimage around Japan” mission. We are looking for experienced sailors as sailing partners for various stages of the voyage, as well as those interested in lending a hand with outfitting (exchanges are possible). Our mission-plan is in its early states and we look forward to all comments and suggestions. Your communication in either Japanese or English is warmly welcomed.

Thank you for your interest,

Richard Gilbert

Kumamoto University

March 1, 2015

To Support our NPO

For PayPal instructions, please contact Richard Gilbert, SHAO Director:

gilbert.japan@gmail.com

Checks may be sent to:

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Please email SHAO at:

shao@sailing-across-oceans.org

For further information, including participation & sponsorship.

References

SHAO Website <http://sailing-across-oceans.org>

Gendaihaiku website <http://gendaihaiku.com>

Research articles and links <http://research.gendaihaiku.com>

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