

THE SEA-GOD AT SUNRISE

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Aji: mackerel

Amida: a name for the Buddha

Anikya: nickname for an older brother

Avast: nautical command for "stop" or "cease"

Bark: a three-masted sailing vessel with only the first two masts square-rigged

Blubber room: the space on the lower deck, aft of the forecastle, where blubber was prepared for boiling

Bow: the front end of a ship

Bowsprit: a pole extending from the bow of sailing ships

Boatheader: the man in charge of a whaleboat, usually an officer

Boat-skid: a wooden structure built over the aft deck of a whaling ship. Harpoons and other equipment were stored underneath, while spare boats were tied above

Boatsteerer: whaling term for a harpooner, second in command of the whaleboat

Cutting-spade: a broad, flat knife on a long pole used to cut whale blubber

Cutting-stage: a long wooden standing-platform lowered over the ship's side with ropes

Daimyo: a feudal Japanese regional or clan lord directly under the command of the shogun

Davit: crane-like arms extending over the side of a ship, used on a whaleship to hold whaleboats

Ebisu: Shinto god of fishermen and fortune

Edo: present-day Tokyo

Forecastle: ship's quarters for common sailors, located under the ship's foredeck.
Pronounced "foc'sle"

Foremast: foremost mast on a ship

Gam: meeting of two whaleships. Captains and crews would exchange goods, letters, and news from home

Gunwale: the top edge of the side of a boat. Pronounced "gunnel"

Hakama: wide-legged pants worn by Japanese men

Hermaphrodite brig: a two masted vessel, with only the foremast square-rigged

Jib: the foremost, triangular sail on a ship

Jib-boom: an extension of the bowsprit, to which the jib is attached

Kannon-sama: Buddhist goddess of mercy

Katsuo: the bonito, or skipjack tuna

Larboard: obsolete term for "port," or the left side of a ship, used by whalers until the 1850s

Lay: a whaler's wages, a percentage of ship's profits promised to each crewman upon the ship's return

Loggerhead: an upright post inside a whaleboat around which the harpoon line wraps during the whale chase.

Masthead: the top of a mast where men stood to watch for whales. Also used to refer to the men standing at those posts

Mainmast: center, usually tallest mast on a ship

Mizzenmast: rearmost mast on a ship

Nenbutsu: verbal recitation of the phrase "I take refuge in Amitabha Buddha"

Old Man: slang for a ship's captain

Piggin: a small bucket used to bail out a whaleboat

Quarter-deck: the ship's deck behind the mainmast, accessible only to officers

Ryukyu: present-day Okinawa

Sandwich Islands: present-day Hawaii

Scrimshaw: the art of whale bone carving

Sculling-oar: a propulsion oar mounted to the stern of a rowboat and moved from side to side

Sperm: whaler slang for "spermaceti," the valuable oil in a sperm whale's forehead

Starboard: nautical term for the right side of a ship

Starboard boat: whaleboat hung from the aftmost davits on a whaleship's starboard side. Usually the captain's boat.

Steerage: on a whaleship, the location of petty officers' quarters, between the blubber-room and captain's quarters.

Stern: the rear end of a ship. Also used as a command, meaning to propel backward

Taffrail: the rail around the stern of a ship

Temperance ship: a whaling ship that did not allow alcohol aboard except for medicinal purposes. Common on ships owned by Quaker merchants.

Tosa: present-day Kochi prefecture, Japan

Tryworks: brick stoves built into the deck of a whaling ship, used to boil whale-oil at sea

Whale-iron: whaler's term for a harpoon

Whale-lance: a whale spear designed to strike the killing blow. Different from a harpoon, which was only designed to hold fast to a whale so the whaleboat crew could maneuver alongside