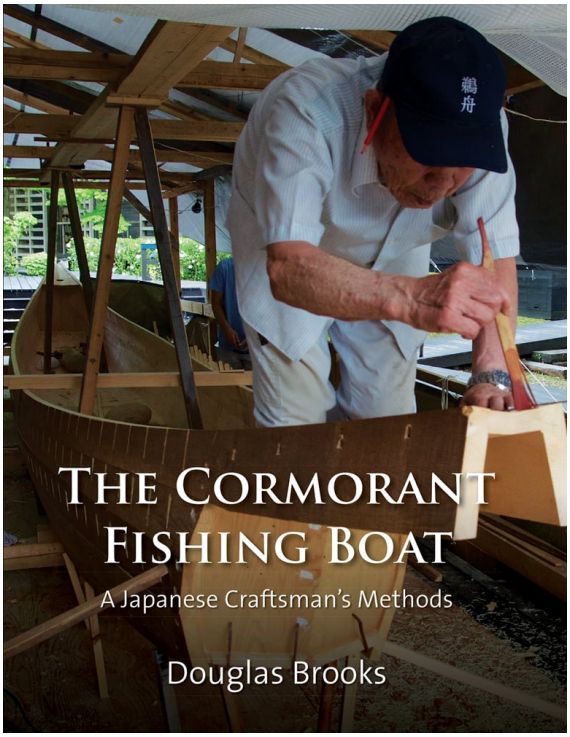
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The Cormorant Fishing Boat

A Japanese Craftsman's Methods

Douglas Brooks

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- Readers are introduced to important aspects of traditional Japanese boatbuilding, including design, workshop and tools, wood and materials, joinery and fastenings, and above all, secrets of the craft

To document and preserve an ancient craft tradition in danger of disappearing, Douglas Brooks apprenticed with five master boatbuilders in Japan between 1996 and 2010, building a different traditional wooden boat with each. His research and experiences were presented in his landmark 2015 publication, *Japanese Wooden Boatbuilding*. This book documents his most recent apprenticeship, building a cormorant fishing boat with 85-year-old master craftsman Seichi Nasu, in Gifu, Japan.

Using trained cormorants to fish has a 1,300 year history in Gifu, and is done at night from special river craft called ubune, literally "cormorant boat." The boat features an extended bow with pivoting boom from which is hung an iron fire basket to light up the water and attract fish, which are then retrieved by the enthusiastic birds.

Together with Mr. Nasu, then 85, Brooks worked with several volunteers over a two-month period to build the 42 foot craft, a design largely unchanged for centuries. As in his previous publications, readers are introduced to important aspects of traditional Japanese boatbuilding, including design and measurements, workshop and tools, wood and materials, joinery and fastenings, and above all, secrets of the craft.

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