

Season's Greetings and Best Wishes for The New Year

December 2003

Dear friends,

I have stayed another twelve months as a guest in Yamagata University in Yonezawa located in a quiet mountain basin 350km north to Tokyo. I am afraid but I have now more free time than before with doing almost no contribution for science but some education. Overleaf is shown a topic from my study on Marquis Tokugawa's *Journeys to Java*: I hope the revised translated manuscript will finally find a publisher in the new future.

Regarding my family, Gon, alias Hidetoshi, now lives in New York with his wife and two daughters, despatched from his company. Wakako is still single and enjoying her life in Tokyo working now for a subsidiary of a German company.

Hoping that the year 2004 will be a better one for everyone,

Yours sincerely,

Toshi

M. Iguchi,

Krakatau and a poem of Lord Alfred Tennyson

Krakatau, a group of islands lying in the Strait of Sunda between Java and Sumatra, became famous in 1883 with the occurrence of huge explosions, one of the largest volcanic eruptions recorded in modern history (e.g., S. Winchester, *Krakatoa - The day the world exploded: August 27, 1883*, Viking, London 2003). The ash was carried up to the upper atmospheric current and generated an abnormal meteorological phenomenon, as Gerald Manley Hopkins contributed a letter to the scientific journal, *Nature* 30 Oct. 1884, and described the colour of the sunset which he saw on 19 October 1884 in Dublin, as: *bronzy near the earth; above like peach, or of the blush colour on ripe hazels*.

Many articles on Krakatau cited a verse as a work by Alfred Tennyson,



*Had the fierce ashes of some fiery peak
Been hurled so high they ranged about the globe?
For day by day, thro' many a blood-red eve,
The wrathful sunset glared.*

It sounded 'Krakatau-like' but whether this short poem was a complete poem of Tennyson has long been my question. The answer has been received from Prof. Jeff Matthews (<http://faculty.ed.umuc.edu/~jmatthew/naples/blog18.htm>), in that it was actually an unauthorised extract, by unknown person, from a much longer poem, *St. Telemachus*, in which the poet laureate had imagined that the atmospheric conditions had been similar in ca. 400A.D. when the monk (also known as Almachius) went to Rome to stop the gladiatory game. The complete poem is copied on the back of this card for your Christmas reading.