



The Virgin of the Thumb, by Agese Dolci (ca.1700)
(Named after the left-hand thumb of the Madonna peeping out from her shawl.)
Tokyo National Museum/An important cultural asset.
http://www.kyuhaku.com/pr/exhibition/exhibition_pre14.html

Season's Greetings and A Happy New Year

December 2008

Dear Friends,

Another year has passed quietly for an old recluse but one special occasion. I was hesitating to send this news but on the 7th November I had repaired to the Imperial Palace for the first time in my life to be given a small order. When I received a notice some weeks earlier, I doubted whether I really deserved that honour but decided to have it, remembering favours received from my friends in the past and thinking that it could be a souvenir to my late wife in the heaven. In April-May, I had some works to help my friends in both Japan and Indonesia to prepare a research proposal on natural rubber which they applied to a scheme of international cooperation for contributing the preservation of global environments, only to fail in the selection in heavy competition. My elder brother passed away in November at the age of eighty-one, urging myself to seriously think what I could do in the rest of my life.

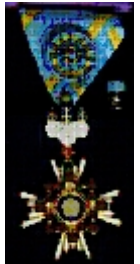
For this Christmas, I have written a story of an image of the Virgin which was brought to Japan from Rome 300 years ago (See, overleaf).

Wishing that the world economy will find a way-out from the current economic turmoil and 2008 will be a better year for you and everyone.

Yours sincerely,

Toshi

M. Iguchi,



The Order of the Sacred Treasure, Gold Rays with Rosette