

The Genesis Cards resemble oracle cards, but I don't encourage people to use them in this way. Those who do so are missing the point. The artistic image on a card, including its symbols, labels and numbers, exists primarily to spark dialogue with your own art. To use the images on the cards to glean personal information is like reserving a room at a hotel and mistaking the hotel door card key for the hotel room. In other words, your own art is the most reliable source of intuitive wisdom.

Did you intend Genesis Art to be used for art therapy?

I had no therapeutic intentions, unless art therapy can be redefined as a recovery from the mistaken belief that only special people were put on this earth to make meaningful art! My friend Chihiro Yoshida, who became a nursing home resident at the shockingly young age of 47, awakened me to the fact that the opposite was true. Chihiro was diagnosed with advanced multiple sclerosis. When I visited her in the autumn of 2008, I hardly recognized the fragile woman behind the walker. Chihiro had been a Butoh dancer, a chef, a weaver, a knitter, and a shiatsu therapist. At a family restaurant close by the nursing home, we got comfortable enough to draw. For an hour Chihiro sat engrossed in a drawing, that looked to me like six amoeba

shapes floating in peach-tinted ether. Elaine Nardaya, our mutual friend, then suggested that we randomly select Genesis Cards.

I wondered whether it was sheer coincidence that the number of amoeba aligned exactly with the number of lotus leaves. The white lotus in the Valor Card offered such an apt description of Chihiro's current state of being, a white lotus, radiant and at peace, that she responded with the most wonderful smile imaginable and said, "Yes, that's me."

Chihiro's art had turned around a potentially awkward meeting where I imagined I was there to commiserate with her or cheer her up. Instead Chihiro, through her drawing, spoke volumes about the resilient spirit that is never diminished by a weakened physical body.

How has Genesis Art evolved over the years?

Genesis Art workshops began in an art studio in November 2007 on Nodai-dori, a shopping street near our home in Setagaya, and reopened in Okachimachi, near Ueno Park's national museums, a year later. Based on sketchbooks, crayons and the deck of Genesis Cards, these workshops are highly portable, so, when asked, I introduce Genesis Art at conferences, private gatherings and as a public service to people residing in places where they especially need cheering, such as hospitals and prisons, orphanages,



Bringing Genesis Art to Tohoku survivors in advanced years who have never done art since childhood has been eye-opening.