

## ARTISTS MEET IN NEW YORK

“Overcoming Self-Doubt” was the theme of the first New York Arts Division meeting of 1999, which was attended by approximately 200 members and 100 guests. Self-confidence is a trait that SGI artists in New York are striving to develop every day, as they pursue their varied careers while practicing this Buddhism in the cultural capital of the world.

Various members related how their practice has brought victory to their lives through strengthening their self-confidence. Duncan Sheik, a 10-year member and bright new recording star for Atlantic Records, shared his determination to compose words and music that will reach people’s hearts. He stressed that his Gajokai and other Buddhist activities led to his first CD release, which sold more than 700,000 copies. He also emphasized that along with doing activities, one must strive every day to perfect one’s art and life. Mr. Sheik later played and sang two original pieces, which were met with much enthusiasm from the audience.

Johnny Rozsa, a professional photographer from London, was introduced to the practice in 1983 by singing legend Tina Turner. In 1989, when he discovered he had the AIDS virus, he received guidance from the late SGI-UK General Director Richard Causton to chant to accomplish his mission and lead a long life. Ten years later, despite the loss of sight in one eye, Rozsa has enormous vitality, takes no medication and is busy with a successful career.

A tremendous sense of joy pervaded the culture center as the members left the meeting with a renewed spirit to become the best artists for kosen-rufu of the 21st century that they possibly can.

— *ROZANNA WEINBERGER and BILL BLACKARD*