

SGI President's 'Recollections' To Be Broadcast
BY JEFF FARR, ASSOCIATE EDITOR
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When radio producer Keiko Kimura read SGI President Ikeda's recollections of meeting leading world figures, she started to imagine them as a radio series. Today her dream became reality as the first recording session for the series took place in a North Hollywood studio with actor and SGI-USA member John Astin.

Beginning April 19, the series, titled "Values and Visions: Portraits of Global Citizens," will be aired every Saturday from 1:30–2:00 p.m. on KALI-FM (106.3) in Los Angeles. Ms. Kimura's production company, GMG, hopes to introduce the series in other major markets as well, including San Francisco, New York and Seattle.

The first half of each program, read by well-known narrator Ryo Kurosawa, is in Japanese; the second half, read by Mr. Astin, is in English. Realizing that many Japanese living in the States feel lonely and tend to associate only among themselves, Ms. Kimura feels President Ikeda's example will give them the courage to make new friends.

"I strongly feel that this series should be widely introduced to the Japanese population," she says, "most of whom are seeking some kind of spiritual nourishment." Mr. Astin adds: "I think they're going to find something in these stories that touches their hearts, touches their minds, their spirits. They're going to feel good and they're going to want to come back and hear more."

Another motivation for Ms. Kimura in producing the series was introducing President Ikeda to an audience who knows his name but may not know of his efforts for peace.

"As a responsible member of the media," she says, "I want to introduce Daisaku Ikeda as the wonderful leader that he is. The majority of people in the Japanese population — here and also in Japan — simply don't know who Daisaku Ikeda is."

The Japanese media has created a negative image of the Soka Gakkai and Mr. Ikeda over the years, she says, and "people do not even try to find out the truth for themselves. They just rely on the secondhand news and image intentionally created by the media. I felt so ashamed to hear about this situation. As a media person, I felt that I should take action by myself to find out who he is."

The first broadcast is of President Ikeda's meeting with the mother of the civil rights movement, Rosa Parks, which appeared in the November 1994 *Seikyo Times*.

President Ikeda relates how Mrs. Parks' refusal to give up her seat to a white passenger started the bus boycott movement in 1955 and how, at their first meeting in 1993, the two instantly hit it off.

"It seems to me the crux of the story is really when they met and understood immediately how the other felt," Mr. Astin says. "There was an immediate connection there. He is someone who's dedicated himself to a cause; she is someone who's dedicated herself to a cause; and they clicked."

Future episodes will include President Ikeda's impressions of children's book illustrator Brian Wildsmith and Club of Rome President Ricardo Diez Hochleitner.

The same series, now in its third year, continues to be published in both the *World Tribune* and *Living Buddhism* as "My Recollections" and "Daisaku Ikeda's Recollections of World Figures" respectively.

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