

August 27, 2004

Forbes Magazine
60 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10011
USA

To the Editor:

Benjamin Fulford and David Whelan's ostensible complaint about the tax exemptions afforded to nonprofits is a thinly veiled pretext to launch a vitriolic attack against a Japan-based Buddhist organization and its United States affiliates. Precious little space is devoted to tax issues. Instead, the article paints a distorted picture of a "sinister" organization's plot to take over the world. The organization in question is the Soka Gakkai, whose members advocate nothing more sinister than international harmony and world peace. I am that organization's president and can assure you that Soka Gakkai bears no resemblance to the "shadowy" "unaccountable" "empire" described by the authors.

Moreover, the authors are simply wrong about the facts. Their worst error subsists in the idea that Soka Gakkai was somehow responsible for the death of a Japanese city councilwoman in the 1990s. I am at a loss to understand why Forbes would print this wild accusation since it was proven unfounded -- indeed defamatory -- by the Tokyo courts years ago. The authors themselves admit that they had access to the courts' files. Did they simply fail to read them or did they choose to ignore their contents? The authors can point to no example of the "violence, blackmail and intimidation" to which the "sect" allegedly resorts for the simple reason that the Soka Gakkai and its affiliated organizations have never engaged in such conduct and find it repugnant in the extreme.

Other errors include the notion that Soka Gakkai and its affiliates "tithe." Not true. Members are not required to donate a single penny. Also false is the idea that Soka Gakkai's honorary president, Daisaku Ikeda, is the autocrat of some sort of "empire." Mr. Ikeda exerts no control over the affiliated entities and certainly does not dictate the manner in which they

account to their local tax authorities. And because each entity is in full compliance with the tax laws of the country in which it operates, the article's insinuation of tax evasion is completely baseless.

These are only a few of the article's myriad inaccuracies. Forbes' readers need some perspective.

Yours truly,

Einosuke Akiya
President