

BCA Silent Auction a rousing success

By Ralph Honda
750th Publicity Committee

After three months of vigorous planning and uncertainty, the BCA Silent Auction made its spectacular debut in February at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Irvine, Calif.

The fundraiser was staged to help support the BCA's Shinran Shonin 750th Memorial Observance that will be held Feb. 27 and 28, 2010 in San Jose.

By all indications, the Silent Auction was a success, grossing over \$28,000, far more than what the committee anticipated. Initially, the goal was to raise \$30,000 but was later scaled down to \$12,000-\$15,000. Net proceeds will help underwrite some expenses for next year's commemoration.

"I was elated by the success of the auction and truly thankful for all of the support and hard work by our committee to help secure items as well as plan and implement the auction," Co-chairperson Judy Kono said.

The outpouring of support from donors and shoppers were tremendous. Since late December, merchandise began streaming in. By the time the auction opened, the committee had received approximately 170 items, worth over \$42,000.

"When I looked around the auction room before it began I was overwhelmed by the generosity of the donors," Kono added.

The variety of merchandise included, Japanese calligraphy from Socho Koshin Ogui, premium dugout seats for four to an upcoming L.A. Dodgers-San Francisco Giants game, roundtrip airline tickets to Japan, hotel accommodations, an 80-carat blue topaz, golf packages, vacation homes, quilts, Japanese paintings, entertainment packages, scrolls and vases.

"This was a fabulous event and everyone seemed truly happy with the treasured items they purchased," co-chairperson Charlene Grinolds remarked. "I never knew we had so many talented artists in our midst."

The auction began with online bidding on Feb. 13 and ran for 10 days. There were 10 sales generated by the time bidding closed.

The majority of activity occurred during the two-day onsite viewing and bidding at the hotel.

On Friday, Feb. 27, shoppers had the opportunity to begin previewing merchandise. The auction was open for bidding later that afternoon and all day Saturday. The auction had two closings Saturday. The first occurred at 7 p.m. and the second at 9.

Floyd Kameda of Palo Alto was beaming when he walked away with a framed photo of a tsuka at Fushimi Inari, photographed by Rev. Gerald Sakamoto. Tsuka are Shinto monuments dedicated to a person or object and is located in Kyoto.

"I admired this monument when I saw it in person when visiting Japan. So, of course, I had to have it when I saw it on display," Kameda said.

Probably the most hotly contested bidding was for a pair of roundtrip airline tickets to Japan. The bidding was fierce between Rev. Bob Oshita (Sacramento), Rev. Akio Miyaji (Orange County), Rev. Yushi Mukojima (San Diego) and Michael Endo (BCA). In the end, Rev. Mukojima came away with the winning bid.

Under the leadership of co-chairs Kono (Berkeley) and Grinolds (White River) the core committee also included Julie Doi (Parlier), Sandy Saeki (Venice), Rev. Ron Kobata (BCA) and yours truly (San Diego). The geographical makeup of the group was widespread. Volumes of emails were shared daily up until two days before the event. Teleconferences were held and face-to-face meetings, individually with Judy and Charlene, took place up to one week before the event.

A special thank you is extended to the Orange County Buddhist Church for accepting and storing merchandise up until the auction's opening and for accommodating the Silent Auction during the National Council meeting.

In closing, thank you to everyone involved for making the Silent Auction an overwhelming success.

A complete list of donors will appear in the April edition of the *Wheel of Dharma*.