

The Tale of the Tancho

A ground-breaking drama that examines the responsibility of a community in the face of a bully

On the marshy, snowy island of Hokkaido, off the coast of northern Japan, lives a flock of Red-crowned cranes. In Japanese, they are called tancho. The tancho are a very rare bird, snow white with a patch of red on their heads.

In our drama, the tancho (Red-crowned cranes) have enjoyed a nice vacation and are ready to return to their island home, Hokkaido, off the coast of Japan. There is much work to be done on the island – the marshes have to be cleaned and cleared so the fish can come; nests must be built for the baby tancho, and very importantly, the garden must be prepared for a celebration in honor of the elder and baby crane's arrival. The empress crane (Classroom Teacher in role) assigns the task of readying the island habitat to the strongest cranes in the flock, the builder cranes (children in role). Along with Yuki (CAT actor/teacher) and Katagawa (CAT actor/teacher), the builder cranes fly home, proud of the responsibility given to them.

Unfortunately, what should have been a time of joyful hard work for the whole community becomes one of discomfort and confusion for Yuki. Starting with simple name-calling and progressing to physical threats, Katagawa targets Yuki with various forms of bullying, creating a situation where the well-being of the flock is at risk.

In this drama, the tancho (children in role) are asked to look at what an individual may do in response to bullying, as well as what role the community plays in its response to bullying. Through problem solving and critical thinking, the children-in-role offer advice, suggestions and possible solutions to the situations played out in this drama.

