

The LLL SIG Newsletter

English Rakugo Presentations in 2012

Tatsuya Sudo

Kanda University of International Studies

I presented Rakugo, traditional Japanese songs called 'dodoitsu', and a modern popular Japanese song in English at the international conference of JALT held in Hamamatsu in October and the mini-conference held at Kanda Institute of Foreign Languages in November.

As for Rakugo, I told a classical piece called Tatsumi no Tsujiura or Fortune Cookies in Tatsumi and two short stories based on English stories. I performed the classical piece sitting on a zabuton and wearing a kimono as usual, but I tried the two short stories; one based on a Canadian picture book, the other based on a British folk tale, sitting on a chair. I started to try this new presentation style recently when I present foreign stories.

Dodoitsu is a poem or a song composed of 7-7-7-5 syllables which developed toward the end of the Edo period or the mid-19th century. Lafcadio Hearn, a well know Japanologist and a ghost story writer translated dozens of Dodoitsu into English, so I sang Dodoitsu both in Japanese and his translation. I also sang an internationally known Japanese song 'Sukiyaki' or 'Ue wo muite aruko' in the literal translation and the international version with the audience.