

## Re: addressing someone without –san or similar

**Source:** <http://sci.tech–archive.net/Archive/sci.lang.japan/2004–06/1135.html>

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**From:** Michael Cash (*REMOVEmikecashCAPS\_at\_sunfield.ne.jp*)

**Date:** 06/21/04

Date: Mon, 21 Jun 2004 20:56:01 +0900

On Mon, 21 Jun 2004 10:23:58 +0000 (UTC), "Adam Atkinson"  
<ghira@mistral.co.uk> brought down from the Mount tablets inscribed:

> "Michael Cash" <REMOVEmikecashCAPS@sunfield.ne.jp> wrote in message  
> news:pocdd0pg19ojo33j67ul5vr20t9nar3bhq@4ax.com

>

>> >Is there any special significance to Hikaru and Sai's addressing each  
>> >other this way? When we hear characters' thoughts, they think  
>> >about people using names with no suffixes. Is this a usual  
>> >convention?

>>

>> It is known as "yobisute" (from "yobu" and "suteru", I'll let you  
>> piece it together from there).

>

>I didn't know either of these words. My dictionary says "call  
>out / summon" for the first and "discard/abandon" for the second.

>

>Um. I don't think I see what this means.

Your subsequent post was on the money.

>

>> It is, as you may have guessed from the  
>> previous sentence, at least common enough to rate having a term to  
>> call it by.

>

>> Special significance? From your own observations, what would your  
>> guess/assumption of the special significance be?

>

>Well, I can imagine that when you're just thinking about someone  
>you might well just think of them as a surname rather than  
>a surname with a suffix on it.

Good point.

>As for the conversations between  
>Sai and Hikaru, I had guessed it might be because they were  
>friends, but even the kids in the show who are friends  
>always seem to call each other "–kun" or "–chan" so I'm not

>quite sure that's it,

The former is <generalization> less formal than "-san" </generalization> so in many/most cases it doesn't carry the same degree of formality, so you might flip the coin over on the other side and say that it carries a greater degree of intimacy, so it wouldn't be out of place for friends to use. The latter is <generalization> devoid of formality and carries a strong sense of intimacy </generalization>. It is a "baby talk" sort of pronunciation of "-san", if I understand it correctly.

>and even when they first meet  
>Hikaru and Sai just use each other's names and I can't  
>imagine they were "close" right from the start. And it  
>can't be that they're choosing to show each other disrespect.  
>Since Hikaru sometimes "thinks" to Sai and sometimes speaks  
>aloud, I thought there might be a difference there, but I  
>haven't noticed one.

Never having seen it, and inserting the unsolicited observation that manga–ain't–real–life, I can't comment on that.

>I'm mostly just listening out for anything I understand at all,  
>and usually watch something after we've done a new chapter  
>to see if I can hear the new things we've just done being  
>used. This week we did "-tai" for wanting to do things,  
>and sure enough a randomly chosen episode of HnG had  
>a character saying "maketakunai". We also did some weather  
>words recently, and there was a reference to rain in the same  
>episode. Very occasionally, I understand a whole sentence.  
>I don't know if this seems very silly, but I did this with  
>Italian way back when as well – feel as though you're making  
>progress my understanding slightly more isolated fragments  
>in "real" material than you did the previous week –  
>and I thought it helped there.

If you like it and it helps you with your studies, more power to you. Charles Eicher will be along shortly to piss on your parade. He's actually a very nice guy, but manga puts a bug up his butt like you wouldn't believe.

--

Michael Cash

"I am sorry, Mr. Cash, but we are unable to accept your rap sheet in lieu of a high school transcript."

Dr. Howard Sprague  
Dean of Admissions  
Mount Pilot College