

Yan, Yan, Yanhaháp

Pick It, Pick It, Always Pick It



This is Nisenan-language children's song sung to the tune of '**Row, Row, Row Your Boat**'. To listen to this song, visit <https://bit.ly/ssbmilullabies> or scan the QR code above. If you have questions, please contact Language@ssband.org.

Lyrics

Yan, yan, yanhaháp,
Yanhaháp c'iwí!
Yánbene, yánbene,
Yánbene, yánbene,
Yan okóm lamí!

*Pick it, pick it, always pick it,
Always pick clover!
You can pick it, you can pick it,
You can pick it, you can pick it,
Pick it all day long!*

Yan, yan, yanhaháp,
Yan okóm wonó!
Yánbene, yánbene,
Yánbene, yánbene,
Payélwes nees opló!

*Pick it, pick it, always pick it,
Pick it every day!
You can pick them, you can pick them,
You can pick them, you can pick them,
We will eat cooked greens!*

About the lyrics

You might wonder why we did not translate the original lyrics of 'Row, Row, Row Your Boat' into Nisenan; this is because the direct translation would be hard to sing to the original tune.

C'iw 'clover' is an important traditional food source. *C'iw* can be eaten raw or cooked.

Cooked greens, including *c'iw* and *pik* (California Poppy) greens, are called *opló* in Nisenan.

In addition to being eaten fresh and cooked, many greens like *c'iw* can be dried to be eaten in the wintertime¹.

¹ This information comes from William Joseph in Uldall & Shipley (1966) and from Beals (1933), who relates information from several Nisenan speakers, including William Joseph.

Language for everyday life

There are many parts of this song that you can expand on and use in everyday life.

Yan- is said several times in this song, sometimes on its own (*yan*) and sometimes with word-endings on it (*yanhaháp, yánbene*). *Yan-* is a Nisenan word root meaning ‘to pick’ things like berries, grapes, and greens (i.e. to gather food by picking it off of stems).

To instruct someone to pick things like clover or berries, you can just say the verb. (This is just when you are talking to one person).

Yan! ‘Pick it!’ / ‘Pick them!’ (You’re telling someone to do this)

The same goes for any verb that ends in a consonant.

Tuy! ‘Sleep!’
Sol! ‘Sing!’

There is a bit of a wrinkle: If you are using a verb that ends in a vowel (one of the letters ‘a’, ‘e’, ‘i’, ‘o’, ‘u’, ‘í’, or ‘ə’), you add *-p* when you are instructing a person to do that activity.

Hatíp! ‘Stop!’ (*hati-* ‘to stop’)
Payyóp! ‘Dance!’ (*payyo-* ‘to dance’)

To suggest or give permission to someone to pick things like berries or clover, you can add the word ending *-bene* to the verb. (This is also just when you are talking to one person).

Yánbene. ‘You can **pick** it.’ / ‘You should **pick** it.’
Túybene. ‘You can **sleep**.’ / ‘You should **sleep**.’
Sólbene. ‘You can **sing**.’ / ‘You should **sing**.’
Hatíbene. ‘You can **stop**.’ / ‘You should **stop**.’
Payyóbene. ‘You can **dance**.’ / ‘You should **dance**.’

For more resources for learning the Nisenan language, please visit the SSBBI Language Department website (<https://bit.ly/ssbmilanguage>) or email us at Language@ssband.org.