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Location: A total of 25,300 Sanie people lived within Kunming Municipality in Yunnan Province in 1999. The Sanie inhabit most of Gufeng and Tuanjie districts in Xishan (West Mountains) County; parts of Fumin County; and parts of Qinglong District in northern Anning County.¹

Identity: The Sanie are one of 120 distinct ethnolinguistic people groups who have been combined by the Chinese authorities to form the Yi nationality. Although the Han Chinese refer to this people as *White Yi* or *White Lolo*, in their own language they refer to themselves only as Sanie.

Language: Linguists David Bradley, Maya Bradley, and Li Longxiang of the Yunnan Academy of Social Sciences have conducted extensive linguistic surveys among the

Sanie. In 1997, at the 30th International Conference on Sino-Tibetan Languages and Linguistics, they published a paper entitled, *The Sanyie of Kunming: a Case of Yi Language Death*. They found that there are fewer and fewer speakers of Sanie in villages the farther one travels from Kunming. Nevertheless, the language is still being spoken by young and old in parts of Gufeng, Tuanjie, and Qinglong districts. Despite their small numbers, Bradley reports that “the degree of dialectical differentiation within Sanie is very great despite the small distances involved.”²

History: Despite their similar names, the Sanie are not the same ethnic group, nor do they speak the same language, as the Sani or Samei. Long ago they may have been related.

Customs: Sanie customs are in the process of assimilation to the pervasive Han Chinese culture. In Xishan County, the Sanie, along with the Bai and Han, celebrate the *Taiyinhui* or “Moon Fair” on two occasions each year. The first celebration takes place on the sixth day of first lunar month. According to Jamin Pelkey, “Most of the participants in the festival are elderly women. Burning sticks of incense, they present various food offerings to the moon, and, after having arranged nine pieces of yellow paper in three small piles they get down on their knees and bow three times.”³

Religion: The Taiyinhui Festival reflects the main religious beliefs of the Sanie, which are a mixture of polytheism and ancestor worship. Pelkey continues: “Following this, passages of the *Taiyangjing* (the Moon’s Scripture) are chanted in unison. In the passages, the moon is praised for all of its qualities and personified as a tender, nocturnal messenger blessing the earth with refreshing dew. The second celebration takes place in conjunction with the mid-Autumn Festival, on the 15th day of the eighth lunar month.”⁴

Christianity: There are believed to be a small number of Sanie Christians near Kunming. Before 1949 many Protestant and Catholic missionary organizations worked in Kunming City and surrounding areas. The majority of Sanie, however, have no awareness of the gospel or its life-giving message.



Population in China:
 25,300 (1999)
 25,900 (2000)
 32,550 (2010)
Location: Yunnan
Religion: Polytheism
Christians: 100

Overview of the Sanie

Countries: China

Pronunciation: “Sah-nieh”

Other Names: Shanie, Shaniepu, Sanyie, Bai Yi, White Yi, Bai Lolo, Shansu

Population Source:
 25,300 (1999 J. Pelkey);
 Out of a total Yi population of 6,572,173 (1990 census)

Location: *Yunnan:* Xishan (22,500), Fumin (2,500), and Anning (300) counties

Status:
 Officially included under Yi

Language: Sino-Tibetan, Tibeto-Burman, Burmese-Lolo, Lolo, Northern Lolo, Yi, Eastern Yi

Dialects: 0

Religion: Polytheism, Animism, Ancestor Worship, Christianity

Christians: 100

Scripture: None

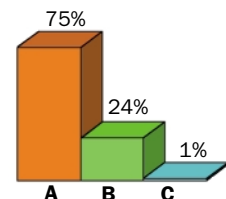
Jesus film: None

Gospel Recordings: None

Christian Broadcasting: None

ROPAL code: None

Status of Evangelization



A = Have never heard the gospel
B = Were evangelized but did not become Christians
C = Are adherents to any form of Christianity