

SAN DIU

The San Diu population in Vietnam is expected to surpass 117,000 by the end of the 20th century—up from 94,000 in 1989. They live in a very widely scattered area encompassing seven different provinces in the north of the country. Their main concentration is in Quang Ninh Province.

The San Diu are a Chinese-speaking group who have been granted status as one of Vietnam's 53 officially-recognized minorities. They claim to have migrated from Guangdong, China in the mid-1600s. Whether the San Diu were originally a Han Chinese group or a tribal group who later adopted Cantonese as their language, is uncertain.

The San Diu are known by a host of

different names, including *Man Quan Coc* ('people wearing shorts'), *Man Vay Xe* ('people wearing split-skirts'), and *Trai*.

The San Diu live in densely-populated villages. Even though it may be a considerable distance to the next San Diu community, they prefer to stay close together. The San Diu often locate their villages at the foot of a mountain and near a stream. The San Diu only gather their water from streams or rivers. They do not dig wells. They believe spirits live in the earth, and to dig a well could result in "hitting the veins of a dragon".

San Diu women wear very dark skirts made of dyed indigo. They like to adorn their appearance with silver and

copper necklaces and earrings. San Diu men wear normal Western clothing except during festivals and ceremonies, when they put on white trousers, black shirts and a turban.

There are large social and economic differences among the San Diu. The rich class own most of the land. They are required to donate small portions of their land to the village leaders and the shamans, called *Taoshi*, so that they can provide for their families. In the past the impoverished San Diu lived in bondage to the rich landowners. Sometimes the poor were forced to sell their land to the rich, who then employed the peasants on subsistence wages.

The greatest honor for a San Diu family is for their son to become a Daoist priest/shaman. For centuries they have believed a Daoist shaman is capable of gaining favor with the spirits, enabling the shaman's family to live in peace.

Most San Diu marriages are monogamous, although if a man's wife fails to bear children it is a disgrace and a second wife is procured. Two people with the same family name are forbidden to marry, unless the direct



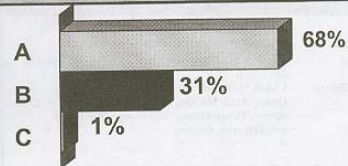
Population:
94,630 (1989)
117,500 (2000)
143,400 (2010)

Language:
Sino-Tibetan

Religion:
Daoism

Christians:
400

Status of Evangelization (Awareness of Christ and the Gospel)



A = have never heard the Gospel or the name of Christ
B = were evangelized but have not yet become Christians
C = Adherents to any form of Christianity

family trees of the couple have been separate for at least five generations. A ceremony is held where the people ask for forgiveness from the ancestors before they continue with the wedding.

Sometimes, when a woman is barren, a second wedding ceremony is arranged. The San Diu believe barrenness is a curse from the spirits, so a mock divorce is held and the woman is driven back to her parent's home. Later the husband again asks for the hand of his wife, and they celebrate a new wedding. By doing this, the San Diu believe they can trick the demons into thinking a new marriage is taking place, which could be blessed with many offspring.

Each San Diu baby is given a chosen name and a family name, but in between, up to a dozen other names are added. These names reflect where the individual stands in the family hierarchy. When San Diu from different regions meet, they are immediately able to tell what family lineage they are from.

The numerous superstitions of the San Diu can be seen in their funeral customs. At the funeral, the sons of the deceased crawl around the grave in an anti-clockwise direction, while the daughters crawl around in a clockwise direction. As they crawl, they throw handfuls of dirt into the grave. They then run into the house without stopping or turning around, and throw dirt into the stables of yard. To complete the ceremony, the children eat a boiled chicken at the place where the coffin had been located the day before.

Three years after a person has been buried, the bones are dug up, washed, dried and placed in a sitting position in a clay jar. The bones are then re-buried. The San Diu celebrate this ceremony with great joy.

The only known Christians among the San Diu are about 400 Catholic believers.



Pray for the San Diu

- 1 In prayer, ask the Holy Spirit to break down the dark cloak of superstition and false worship that has smothered the San Diu. Pray they will be set free in Christ's Name.
- 2 There are large numbers of Vietnamese believers in northern Vietnam. Pray they will obey the Great Commission and take the Gospel to their San Diu neighbors.
- 3 Ask God to strengthen the few San Diu believers, making them strong in their faith and zealous witnesses for Him.

Overview of the San Diu

Countries	: Vietnam	Subgroups (3)	: Man Quan Coc (Man wearing shorts), Man Vay Xe (Man in split skirts), Trai Dat (Trai on the ground)
Pronunciation	: "San-Deu"	Religion	: Daoism, Ancestor Worship, Buddhism, Caodaism, Christianity
Other Names	: San Deo, Man Quan Coc, Man Vay Xe, Trai Dat, Trai, San Nhiu	Christians	: 400
Population Source	: 94,630 (1989 census)	Scripture	: none
Location	: Quang Ninh, Ha Bac, Bac Thai, Vinh Phu: Lap Thach district; Tuyen Quang, Hai Hung, Thanh Hoa	Jesus film	: none
Language	: Sino-Tibetan, Chinese	Gospel Recordings	: none
Dialects	: 0	Christian Radio	: none
		ROPAL code	: none