

Kung-Fu Training Formulas: Part 2

In last month's column, I discussed two formulas that can be used in conjunction with hard-style training. For softer internal training, one of my teachers sometimes employed a unique training formula for students learning qi gong exercises for the first time. This formula consists of the gallbladders and bile from three highly poisonous snakes. These ingredients are mixed with rice wine. Snake medicine is highly respected in many parts of Asia. Nearly every part of the snake has a medicinal effect, including the skin, flesh, blood and sexual organs. In Taipei, Snake Street was a notorious alley where live snakes were sold for their medicinal and tonic effects.

The gallbladder and bile are useful to martial artists because they smooth the



flow of qi throughout the body. This can be useful for helping students feel energy moving when they are first learning qi gong exercises. This formulation of the three gallbladders is known as san she dan and can be purchased in some herbal shops. In the past a pre-made wine (san she jiu) was available from Chinese liquor stores, although in recent years I have not seen it in New York's Chinatown. San she dan in wine is also useful for dispersing phlegm and is indicated for joint pain that is exacerbated by wind/damp/cold.

Tonic herb formulas, when used judiciously, can be a useful adjunct to training. One common scenario for training injuries occurs during intensive training seminars, belt testing or elimination tournaments in which students and competitors push their bodies beyond the normal limits. In these situations, tonic formulas can help bolster the body's natural reserves, thereby preventing exhaustion and injury.

One broad spectrum tonic that can be useful in these instances is tze pao san pien (three whip pills). This patent remedy is available in many forms from Chinese herb stores. It is most effective in the form of honey pills, which come in boxes of 10 pills.

Tze pao san pien supplements qi, blood and yin and yang. These pills strongly activate the body's healing and recuperative powers. They should not be taken carelessly and only for a short period of time, when the body's reserves are being stressed or depleted. I often prescribe them in cases of serious fractures where a person's constitution is compromised and the bone is not healing. In a

kajukenbo class, one of my students suffered a cracked sternum after receiving a flying sidekick to the chest. Although he was a strong individual, the injury was not healing despite acupuncture treatments and rest. Ten days of tze pao san pills—one a day—helped the injury heal so that he could return to training.

Another example of the effectiveness of this tonic is a Korean-style fourth-degree black belt whose master-level test took 12 hours a day for an entire week. He was worried about his ability to get through it, especially since he already had a

chronic knee injury. I gave him a box of these pills. He took one a day for a week and by the last two days of the test, much younger students who had at first made fun of his "Chinese pills" were amazed at his stamina.

A tonic formula that can be taken more long term as a "longevity tonic" or used similarly to tze pao san pills is shou wu chih. Shou wu chih is blood and qi tonic and is available from most Chinese herb pharmacies. Two tablespoons of the juice can be combined with hot water to make tea or it can be mixed with alcohol and taken as a cordial. He shou wu (literally, "Mr. He's Black Hair"), the primary ingredient from which the formula takes its name, is used for depletion of essence (jing) and blood. This can cause the hair to receive insufficient nourishment resulting in dry, white hair. In shou wu chih, he shou wu is combined with other tonic herbs to powerfully boost qi, nourish fluids and blood and boost essence.

For those who want to make their own shou wu chih, the following formula can be used:

Shou Wu Chih

30 grams HE SHOU WU
(Radix Polygnum Multiflori)
30 grams HUANG JING
(Rhizoma Polygonati)
20 grams DANG GUI
(Radix Angelicae Sinensis)
20 grams SHU DI HUANG
(Radix Rehmanniae Glutinosae)
12 grams CHEN PI
(Pericarpium Citri Reticulate)
10 pieces HONG ZAO (pitted)
(Red Fructus Ziziphi Jujubae)
9 grams GAN CAO
(Radix Glycyrrhizae Uralensis)
9 grams MU DING XIANG
(Fructus Caryophylli)
9 grams SHA REN
(Fructus Seu Semen Amomi) 🍵

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