San Qi Formula *San Qi Pian*

Origins: Modern formula

San Qi Formula (*San Qi Pian*) is a modern formulation designed to replicate the actions of the famous Chinese formula, *Yunnan Baiyao*. The ingredients of the original formula are a well-guarded secret, with only the chief ingredient, *san qi*, disclosed. The formulation under discussion here is designed to be fully transparent in order to aid the practitioner in prescription.

General Signs/Symptoms

San Qi Formula (*San Qi Pian*) can be used to treat bleeding of nearly any etiology[i] (external trauma or internal disharmony, such as reckless blood, heat, toxic heat, qi deficiency, or blood stasis). This formula also effectively treats pain and swelling from trauma or arthritis.

Applications

1. **Stanches bleeding**
2. **Dispels blood stasis**
3. **Disperses swelling and relieves pain**
4. **Purges toxicity**

Ingredients

Pinyin	Latin	English	Percent of Formula
(Sheng) San Qi, Tian Qi (chief)	Notoginseng (radix)	Tienqi ginseng, Pseudoginseng Root	45%
Xian He Cao (deputy)	Agrimoniae (herba)	Agrimony	20%
Ji Guan Hua (deputy)	Celosiae Cristatae (flos)	Cockscomb Flower	15%
Bai Mao Gen (deputy)	Imperatae (rhizoma)	Imperata Rhizome	10%
(Sheng) Ce Bai Ye (deputy)	Platycladi (cacumen)	Oriental Arborvitae Leaf and Stem (raw)	10%

General Indications / Modern Applications

- Arthritis
- *Bi* syndrome (wind-damp with blood stasis)
- Bleeding (internal or external) from trauma
- Bleeding from infection
- Blood in stool or urine
- Blood in the urine (hematuria)
- Bruising (contusion)
- Coughing blood (hemoptysis)
- Crohn's disease, acute with bleeding
- Epistaxis (nosebleed)
- Gums, bleeding
- Hematemesis (vomiting of blood)
- Hemoptysis (coughing blood)
- Hemorrhage
- Hemorrhoids
- Menstrual bleeding, excessive
- Phlebitis
- Postpartum bleeding
- PTSD
- Rectal bleeding
- Swelling (from toxin or trauma)
- Trauma, emotional
- Trauma, physical, pain, swelling or bleeding from
- Ulcers, bleeding
- Uterine bleeding (excessive)

Formula Discussion

Most of the time, when a practitioner finds a patient's indication listed with a particular formula, s/he must take care to determine that the disease pattern and the formula pattern are also a match. This is a basic doctrine of Chinese medicine. When treating bleeding disorders with **San Qi Formula** *(San Qi Pian)*, pattern identification is not usually a crucial determinant. A perusal of Table 3 below will demonstrate the variety of patterns this formula addresses. Tables 1 and 4 show the variety of bleeding disorders treated and channels entered by each of the ingredients of **San Qi Formula** *(San Qi Pian)*. The chief exceptions for using **San Qi Formula** *(San Qi Pian)* to treat bleeding disorders are (1) when the origin of the bleeding is purely hormonal; and (2) when the bleeding is due to severe deficiency. In the case of hormonal bleeding, **San Qi Formula** *(San Qi Pian)* can still be used, but it is usually wise to use in conjunction with the correct prescription hormone. When severe qi deficiency causes blood to leak out of the vessel, **San Qi Formula** *(San Qi Pian)* should be combined with **Ginseng and Astragalus Formula** *(Bu Zhang Yi Qi Tang)*.

Aside from most types of bleeding disorders, a curious application of **San Qi Formula** *(San Qi Pian)*—and *Yunnan Baiyao*—is the treatment of emotional trauma and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). The theory here is that all trauma, be it physical or emotional, involves blood stasis. The heart stores the *shen* in the blood by imprinting experience into blood. When we experience emotional trauma, it is as much a physiological event as it is emotional.

Formula Actions

- **Stanches bleeding**
- **Dispels stasis**
- **Disperses swelling and relieves pain**
- **Purges toxicity**

Tongue

Often purple; can be red from heat or pale and swollen if qi deficient.

Pulse

Hollow *(koumai)*, hurried *(cumai)*, wiry *(xianmai)* choppy *(semai)*, hidden *(fumai)*, rapid *(shuomai)*, weak *(ruomai)*, and others.

Contraindications / Cautions

Do not use during pregnancy.

Dosage

The standard dosage is 2-4 tablets, 2-4 times daily, depending on severity. For emotional trauma dosage, see "Formula Discussion."

Anything we take in from the world and make a part of ourselves, be it food, observations, or experience, is imprinted into the blood by the heart, according to classical OM theory. The heart performs this action of 'imprintation' continuously as the moments of our lives accumulate.

According to traditional explanations, the qi from food does not become blood simply by being absorbed from the intestines. Rather, the *gu* qi from food rises into the chest where it first combines with qi gathered by the lungs; once the qi of earth (*gu* qi/ qi from food) combines with the qi of heaven (oxygen) it travels to the heart. But before it passes into the heart it is usually referred to not as "blood" but as "red substance". This distinction is in place to remind us that blood is not blood until it contains our *shen*. The heart-kidney axis *(shaoyin)* allows for the easy combination of *jing* (essence) and *yuan* qi with the red substance inside the heart chamber. It is within the heart chamber that the emperor combines red substance and *yuan* qi, finally infusing that combination with *shen* to make blood.

But blood and *shen* are not synonymous. The *shen* does not come from combining food and air. The *shen* comes from the heart's impressions, which in turn are influenced by the nature of our psychic constitutions, our *jing*, *yuan* qi, and all the previously-imprinted *shen* that circulates as memory in the blood. The record imprinted into our *shen*, is not like the record of entries in a ledger, but the feeling-impressions from memory, experience, judgments and attitudes. The term, "heart-stopping" is often used as a cliché to describe a shocking event. But within this cliché is a truth revealing a link between blood stasis and emotional trauma. Emotional trauma can be concurrent with physical trauma, or it can be experienced on its own; both scenarios involve stasis because the heart's continuous imprintation function is interrupted, shaken; it stutters or hesitates at the moment of shock; this hesitation creates a stasis. The shock of emotional trauma invariably affects the *shen* (by definition of its being emotionally traumatic), and therefore must also affect some or multiple parts of the emperor-complex, i.e., the heart *zang* itself, its vessels, the blood that carries the *shen*, or any combination of these three. **San Qi Formula** *(San Qi Pian)* can be part of an especially effective strategy to rectify the disturbed *shen* with the emperor complex. The dosage is usually large (4-8 tablets, depending on constitution) and taken with a small glass of red wine (or ginger tea) before bed for 3-4 nights in a row. This strategy should be concurrent with proper psychotherapy. Wait 3-10 days between courses, if multiple courses are needed.

Synergy of Ingredients

The temperatures of the constituent substances vary enough to make the overall temperature of this formula very close to neutral. 45% of the formula is warm, 20% is neutral, 15% is cool, 10% is slight cold, and only 10% is cold. Yet the only cold substance, imperata rhizome (*bai mao gen)* is said to not damage the stomach qi and to actually have a nourishing effect. Notogineng *(san qi)* is the only substance in the formula that invigorates blood stasis, but it is 45% of the formula, so the action to invigorate blood and remove stasis is strong. Imperata rhizome (*bai mao gen)* stops bleeding by cooling blood and arresting the chaotic movement of blood. All the other constituents of **San Qi Formula** *(San Qi Pian)* astringe bleeding in various zones and tissues. (See Table 1.)

To appreciate how **San Qi Formula** *(San Qi Pian)* can treat so many types of bleeding disorders, it is helpful to compare the actions of the constituent ingredients in the following tables.

Table 1: Common Bleeding Disorders and the Applications of Constituent Substances

	Bleeding from trauma	Epistaxis (nosebleed)	Hemoptysis (coughing blood)	Hematemesis (vomiting blood)	Hematuria (blood in urine)	Hemorrhoids	Uterine Bleeding	Bleeding Gums
San Qi	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Xian He Cao	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Ji Guan Hua					X	X	X	
Bai Mao Gen		X	X	X	X	X		
Ce Bai Ye		X	X	X	X	X		

Table 2: Anti-Toxin Actions of Constituent Substances

	Anti-bacterial	Anti-parasitic	Anti-viral	Anti-fungal	Reduces Toxicity / Anti-inflammatory
San Qi	X		X	X	X
Xian He Cao	X	X		X	X
Ji Guan Hua	X	X			
Bai Mao Gen	X				X
Ce Bai Ye	X		X		

Table 3: OM Patterns of Bleeding Disorders Addressed by Constituent Substances

San Qi	Xian He Cao	Ji Guan Hua	Bai Mao Gen	Ce Bai Ye
Bleeding from stasis		Bleeding from stasis		
Bleeding from excess heat	Bleeding from excess heat	Bleeding from excess heat	Bleeding from excess heat	Bleeding from excess heat
	Bleeding from deficiency heat	Bleeding from deficiency heat	Bleeding from deficiency heat	Bleeding from deficiency heat
Bleeding from cold stasis	Bleeding from cold stasis	Bleeding from cold stasis		
	Bleeding from deficiency cold			
Bleeding from infection	Bleeding from infection	Bleeding from infection	Bleeding from infection	
	Bleeding from qi deficiency			

Table 4: Channels Entered by Constituent Substances

	San Qi	Xian He Cao	Ji Guan Hua	Bai Mao Gen	Ce Bai Ye
Liver	X	X	X		X
Lung		X		X	X
Large Intestine	X		X		X
Stomach	X			X	
Spleen		X			
Small Intestine				X	
Urinary Bladder				X	

Table 5: Unique Actions of Constituent Substances (other than hemostatic)

San Qi	Xian He Cao	Ji Guan Hua	Bai Mao Gen	Ce Bai Ye
Cardioprotective	Used for bleeding due to heat, cold, excess, or deficiency	Consolidates *jing*	Clears excess or latent heat	Promotes hair growth
Anti-atherosclerotic	Alleviates diarrhea and dysentery	Preserves body fluids	Decreases vascular permeability	Stops vaginal discharge
Antiarrhythmic	Analgesic	Stops vaginal discharge	Promotes urination, reduces edema	Disperses dampness from *bi* syndrome and trauma
Hepatoprotective	Reduces swelling and edema		Protects the yin	Regenerates flesh
Renoprotective	Prevents leakage of qi and blood		Effectively vents rashes	Topically used to heal burnt flesh
Analgesic			Treats jaundice	Expectorant
Reduces swelling and edema				Boosts and protects yin
Antioxidant				Stops bleeding from qi and blood deficiency
Increases sperm motility				
CNS protective				
PNS protective				

Modern Applications

The "modern applications" for **San Qi Formula** *(San Qi Pian)* do not vary from classical indications. Bleeding issues are bleeding issues. There are some modern disease designations, such as PTSD, Crohn's Disease, or amoebic dysentery, that are known to be helped with the ingredients of this formula, but the common denominator in each will be bleeding or trauma. However, it may be informative and useful here to mention some studies done on the individual ingredients of this formula.

San Qi—See **Published Studies on San Qi/ Notoginseng**, on page 6.

Xian He Cao— Agrimony has long been used to stanch bleeding. It promotes platelet production and accelerates coagulation time.[1] *Xian he cao* also has the function to invigorate blood. The anti-hemostatic effect is dose dependent and is most effective at lower doses. Its antiplatelet action is effective in treating acute pulmonary thromboembolism. A study was done on mice showing that *xian he cao* was effective at preventing ADP-induced acute pulmonary thromboembolic death (aspirin and indomethacin had no effect) and collagen and sodium arachidonate-induced thromboembolic death.[ii]

Modern research has shown this herb to be very effective at relieving pain and reducing edema. A recent study done on mice concluded that *xian he cao* has a powerful analgesic effect, increasing the pain threshold, and significant anti-inflammatory action, effectively reducing swelling and edema.[iii]

Ji Guan Hua— Celosiae or cockscomb flower clears heat, cools blood, and stops bleeding. One study shows bleeding time was greatly reduced in mice five days after they were given a decoction of *ji guan hua* versus the control group. In the same study rabbits were given the same decoction. Seven days after taking *ji guan hua* coagulation time, prothrombin time, and plasma recovery was shortened, as well as significantly shortened euglobulin lysis time (which measures overall fibrinolysis) compared to the control group.[iv]

Bai Mao Gen— Imperata rhizome is most often used for treating epistaxis, hematuria, and nephropathy. A study to investigate the effectiveness of *bai mao gen* for nephropathy in rats was done. The results showed that *bai mao gen* can significantly reduce hematuria, proteinuria, and IgA nephropathy in rats, as well as showing improved renal function.[v]

Ce Bai Ye—Oriental Arborvitae is known for stopping bleeding due to heat in the blood. It can be used for any type of bleeding including deficiency. One study done on mice showed bleeding time was reduced by 62% compared to the control group.[vi] Another study showed that *ce bai ye* (charred) can significantly shorten bleeding time and plasma recalcification time (partial thromboplastin time) in mice and rats.[vii]

Formula Comparisons

San Qi Tablets (*San Qi Wan*) and **San Qi Formula** (*San Qi Pian*) have similar actions to stanch bleeding and dispel blood stasis to treat trauma and bleeeding. **San Qi Tablets** (*San Qi Wan*) has only one ingredient: *san qi*/panax notoginseng root. **San Qi Formula** (*San Qi Pian*) is 45% *san qi*, plus four other herbs that assist and broaden the stanch bleeding function. *Xian he cao* both astringes and invigorates blood to stanch bleeding. *Ji guan hua, bai mao gen,* and *ce bai ye* all cool the blood and stanch bleeding by virtue of their astringency. **San Qi Tablets** (*San Qi Wan*) is used more often for cardiovascular problems and, as a single-herb tablet, is ideal for combining with

other formulas. **San Qi Formula** (*San Qi Pian*) is a general formula for any type of bleeding, but with its heat-clearing function is a better choice if the bleeding is caused by heat.

There are two main classifications for non-traumatic internal bleeding: excess and deficient. Excess type bleeding is most often due to heat in the blood. While there is often internal organ involvement, by the time bleeding occurs it is due to heat pushing out the blood from the vessels. **San Qi Formula** (*San Qi Pian*) works on various manifestations of excess bleeding such as coughing or vomiting blood, nose bleeds, blood in the urine, excessive uterine bleeding, intestinal bleeding, and ecchymosis. The bleeding is often accompanied with fever, thirst, and a general feeling of heat. The blood will be dark red or bright red and the amount can be profuse. **Rehmannia Cool Blood Formula** (*Tu Fu Ling Sheng Di Huang Wan*) also treats these conditions when blood-heat is the underlying cause. By clearing heat and cooling blood it will in turn stop the bleeding. **San Qi Formula** (*San Qi Pian*) focuses on effectively stopping the bleeding. It also treats the underlying cause, heat in the blood with several of the deputy herbs, *ji guan hua, bai mao gen,* and *ce bai ye* to cool blood and stanch bleeding, though its focus is to stanch bleeding. Use **San Qi Formula** (*San Qi Pian*) to stop the bleeding, after the initial bleeding has subsided switch to **Rehmannia Cool Blood Formula** (*Tu Fu Ling Sheng Di Huang Wan*) or another appropriate formula to focus more on the underlying cause of the bleeding.

Endnotes

[i]Wei Xianhui, "The Clinical Application of Agrimony", F*ujian Traditional Chinese Medicine*, Vol 6, 1986.
[ii]Hsu M F, et al., "Effect of Hsien-ho-t'sao (Agrimonia Pilosa) on Experimental Thrombosis in Mice", *The American Journal of Chinese Medicine*, Vol 15, 1987.
[iii]Gong, Chungui, et al., "Experimental Studies of Anti-inflammatory and Analgesic Effects of Extract from Herba Agrimoniae", *Journal of Pharmaceutical Practice*, Vol 6, 2006.
[iv]Guo Liwei, et al., "Hemostatic Effect of Flos Celosiae Cristatae and its Mechanism", *Journal of Nanjing University of Traditional Chinese Medicine*, 1996.
[v]Yin Yousheng, et al., "Effects of Rhizoma Imperatae and its Compound Decoction on the Model of IgA Nephropathy in Rats", *Li Shi Zhen Medicine and Materia Medica Research*, Vol 11, 2011.
[vi]Xu Zhenwen, et al., "Oriental Arborvitae Hemostatic Ingredients," *Chinese Medicine Bulletin*, Vol 2, 1983.
[vii]Chen Chao, et al., "Pharmacodynamic Study of Oriental Arborvitae Hemostatic Effect" Traditional Chinese Medicine Branch of the Chinese Medical Association Symposium, 2008.

Useful Combinations

For bleeding due to heat in the blood	Use with **Rehmannia Cool Blood Formula**
For bleeding due to spleen deficiency	Use with **Ginseng and Astragalus Formula**
For bleeding due to yin deficiency with deficiency fire	Use with **Rehmannia and Scrophularia Formula**
For blood in the urine	Use with **Polyporus and Dianthus Formula**
For blood in the stool	Use with **Ginseng and Astragalus Formula** for spleen deficiency, or **Wu Hua Formula** for damp-heat
For bleeding from fibroids	Use with **Polyporus and Dianthus Formula**
For excessive menstrual bleeding	Use with **Ginseng and Astragalus Formula** for qi deficiency, or **Chong Release Formula** for blood stagnation, or **Rehmannia Cool Blood Formula** for blood heat
For cough with blood	Use with **Lily Preserve Metal Formula** for yin deficiency, or **Mulberry and Lycium Formula** for lung heat

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