

ST36 - *Zu San Li* - A Superstar of Acupuncture Points

By Gloria Garland L.Ac, Dipl. Ac. & CH.

Over time, volumes have been written about the acupuncture point ST36 (*Zu San Li*). It is truly a superstar of points, and it is easy to understand why. If I was stranded on a desert island and had only one acupuncture needle, ST36 would be my point of choice. I use it frequently on both my human and horse patients. Today we use ST36 alone or in combination with other points for disease prevention and overall health maintenance.

ST36 is the #1 point to strengthen the body's vital qi and blood! ST36 is located on the hind leg, below the stifle on the gaskin below the crest of the tibia on the long digital extensor muscle. It benefits the earth element, which is responsible for digestive/nourishment functions, and enhances wei qi (immunity). ST36 is an extremely effective, easy to use and versatile point for the horse owner to treat gastric pain, abdominal pain, bloating, diarrhea, colic, stifle and hind limb pain and atrophy, poor condition, fatigue and recovery from illness.

Zu San Li translates as "leg three distances." Acupuncture point names containing the number three tend to be very strong, popular points with special abilities. This is truly the case with ST36!

Traditionally speaking, applying moxa to ST36 is said to make a travel-worn hiker strong enough to walk three more miles, hence the name.

Moxabustion is the process of heating an acupuncture point with a roll of moxa (*Artemisia vulgaris*). A moxa roll is an oversized herbal cigar, which is lit on one end and held near an acupuncture point. Part of my strategy for the mature horse (and rider) is to apply moxa or simple acupressure to ST36 on a weekly basis. Any horse over fourteen years old or rider over forty will directly benefit from the qi enhancing effects.

