



## How to study single herbs – An Example

### Step 1. Pīnyīn name and category

Category of these herbs is: Xīn Liáng Jiě Biǎo Yào – Cool, Acrid Herbs that Release the Exterior

First the list of names in the ‘verse’ format:

Group 1

Bó Hé  
Sāng Yè  
Jú Huā  
Gé Gēn  
Níu Bàng Zǐ

Group 2

Chái Hú  
Chán Tuì  
Shēng Má  
Màn Jīng Zǐ

Both groups end with a Zǐ.

### Step 2. Add the properties of the herbs

<i>Herb</i>	<i>Flavour*</i>	<i>Nature*</i>	<i>Channel*</i>
Bó Hé	ac	cl	G F
Sāng Yè	sw bit	cd	F G
Jú Huā	sw bit-	cl	G F
Gé Gēn	sw ac	cl	P W
Níu Bàng Zǐ	bit ac	cd	F W
<i>Herb</i>	<i>Flavour*</i>	<i>Nature*</i>	<i>Channel*</i>
Chái Hú	bit ac	cl	D G XB SJ
Chán Tuì	sw slt	cd	F G
Shēng Má	sw bit ac	cl	F P W DC
Màn Jīng Zǐ	bit ac	cl	G W PG

#### Similarities:

All are Cool, except for Sāng Yè, Níu Bàng Zǐ, and Chán Tuì which are Cold.

Sweet are: Sāng Yè, Jú Huā, Gé Gēn, Chán Tuì, Shēng Má

Bitter are: Sāng Yè, Níu Bàng Zǐ, Chái Hú, Shēng Má, Màn Jīng Zǐ

All are Acrid, except for: Sāng Yè, Jú Huā, Chán Tuì

Differences:

Only Chán Tuì is Salty.

Jú Huā is slightly Bitter.

Bó Hé is only Acrid.

**Step 3. Add the actions of the herbs**

<i>Herb</i>	<i>Flavour</i>	<i>Nature</i>	<i>Channel*</i>	<i>Actions</i>
Bó Hé	ac	cool	G F	Disperse Fēng-Rè, Clears head, eyes, and benefits throat, Promotes skin eruption to alleviate itching, Allows constrained Gān-Qì to flow freely.
Sāng Yè	sw bit	cold	F G	Expels Fēng & clears Rè from Fèi, Clears Gān & eyes, Cools Xuè & stops bleeding.
Jú Huā	sw bit-	cool	G F	Disperse Fēng, clears Rè, Clears Gān and eyes, Calms Gān & extinguishes Fēng.
Gé Gēn	sw ac	cool	P W	Releases the muscles (neck), clears Rè, Nourishes Jīn-Yè & alleviates thirst, Vents measles, Alleviates diarrhea, Treats symptoms of hypertension, Lifts clear Yáng Qì.
Níu Bàng Zǐ	bit ac	cold	F W	Disperses Fēng-Rè, benefits throat, Clears Rè & relieves toxicity, Vents rashes, Moistens Intestines.
Chái Hú	bit ac	cool	D G XB SJ	Resolves shào yáng disorders & reduces fever, Spreads Gān-Qì & relieves constraint, Raises Yáng Qì.
Chán Tuì	sw salt	cold	F G	Disperses Fēng & clears Rè, Clears eyes & removes superficial visual obstruction, Vents rashes, Stops spasms & extinguishes Fēng.
Shēng Má	sw bit ac	cool	F P W DC	Releases exterior & vents measles, Clears Rè & relieves toxicity, Raises Yáng-Qì & lifts the sunken.
Màn Jīng Zǐ	bit ac	cool	G W PG	Disperse Fēng, clears Rè, Clears & benefits head & eyes, Drains Shī & expels Fēng.

Note: the actions in this table are a kind of ‘thumbnail’. It should help you to remember the text ‘behind’ it.

**Comparisons**

Disperse Fēng-Rè and promote the expression of rashes	Bó Hé   Níu Bàng Zǐ   Chán Tuì
In descending order of strength as a sweat-inducing agent: disperse Fēng-Rè and clear Gān-Huǒ	Bó Hé   Níu Bàng Zǐ   Chán Tuì Sāng Yè   Jú Huā
Clear vision	Jú Huā (nourishes eyes, but does not eliminate superficial visual obstruction)



Release exterior and raise Yáng-Qì	Gé Gēn Chái Hú Shēng Má
Reduce fever and treat malarial disorders	Chái Hú
Dispersing Rè in Yáng Míng channel at muscle level	Gé Gēn
Promote expression of rashes, use together:	Gé Gēn & Shēng Má
To raise the Yáng-Qì, use together:	Chái Hú & Shēng Má

Note on Channel:

In this example codes are used. The first letter of each pīnyīn word. See the table below for the whole list of channel codes.

Code	Pīnyīn	English
G	Gān	Liver
D	Dǎn	Gallbladder
X	Xīn	Heart
XC	Xiǎo Cháng	Small Intestine
XB	Xīn Bāo	Pericard
SJ	Sān Jiǎo	Tripple Burner (Energizer)
P	Pí	Spleen
W	Wèi	Stomach
F	Fèi	Lungs
DC	Dà Cháng	Large Intestine
S	Shèn	Kidney
PG	Páng Guāng	Urinary Bladder

**Summary**

I hope this will encourage you to create your own lists. In this example many pīnyīn words are used, because this is compulsory for B.Sc and M.Sc. level study.

But you can also use plain English (or whatever language), etc.

However, try to use pīnyīn. It is not as difficult as you might think. After all you're studying Chinese Medicine. In orthodox medicine you have to learn Latin words and pharmaceutical terms (and they are often not easy to remember!).

**References**

Bensky, D & Gamble, A., *Chinese Herbal Medicine Materia Medica* revised edition, Eastland Press, 1993.

Wiseman, N. & Feng Ye, *A practical dictionary of Chinese Medicine*, first edition, Paradigm Publication, 1998.