Combining medicinal substances in terms of feudal hierarchy.

Main therapeutic action, determines the actions of the other herbs in the formula

Emperor (Jūn) [king, sovereign, lord, chief]

Principal pattern or disease. Main condition or syndrome.

Minister (Chén) [associate, deputy]

Coexisting pattern or disease.

Harshness, toxicity.

Harmonizes and integrates actions of the other herbs in the formula.

Assistant (Zuŏ) [adjuvant] (type a, b, c)

assists or enhances actions of

moderates

of

of

Type a: helpful assistant (zuŏ zhù)
Type b: corrective assistant (zuŏ zhì)
Type c: opposing assistant (zuŏ fān)

Harmonizing effect

Direction

Complaint, Organ, Channel

Harmonizes and integrates actions of the other herbs in the formula.

Another therapeutic direction.

Symptoms

Opposite of Jūn. Serious and complex disorders

A less important aspect of the pattern or disease.

Against

Main ingredient directed against

directed against