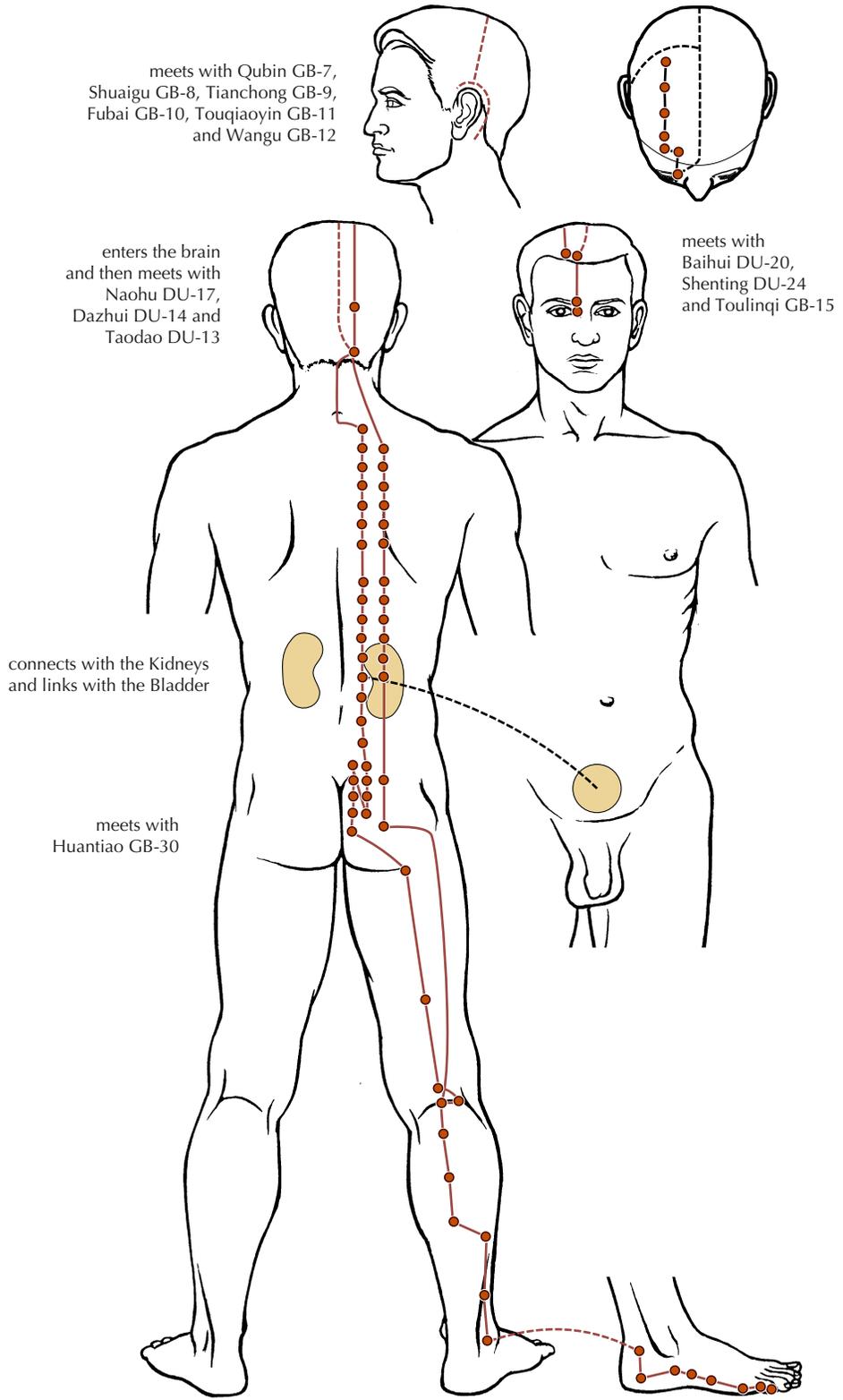


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THE BLADDER CHANNEL  
OF FOOT TAIYANG

### THE BLADDER CHANNEL OF FOOT TAIYANG



The Bladder primary channel

**THE BLADDER PRIMARY CHANNEL**

- begins at the inner canthus of the eye at Jingming BL-1 and ascends along the forehead to the vertex to intersect with Toulinqi GB-15, Shenting DU-24 and Baihui DU-20,
- from the vertex, a branch descends to the temples in the region above the ear, intersecting the Gall Bladder channel at points Qubin GB-7, Shuaigu GB-8, Tianchong GB-9, Fubai GB-10, Touqiaoyin GB-11 and Wangu GB-12,
- from the vertex, another branch enters the brain, meets the Governing channel at Naohu DU-17 and then emerges to descend to the nape of the neck where the channel splits into two branches.

*The first (medial) branch*

- descends along the posterior aspect of the neck, intersecting Dazhui DU-14 and Taodao DU-13, then descends alongside the spine, 1.5 cun lateral to the midline, to the lumbar region,
- penetrates deep into the interior via the para-vertebral muscles to connect with the Kidneys and link with the Bladder,
- a sub-branch separates in the lumbar region, descends along the sacrum, crosses the buttock and descends to the popliteal fossa of the knee at Weizhong BL-40.

*The second (lateral) branch*

- separates at the nape of the neck and descends to the medial border of the scapula and then parallel to the spine, 3 cun lateral to the midline, to the gluteal region,
- crosses the buttock to intersect at Huantiao GB-30, then descends along the postero-lateral aspect of the thigh to meet with the previous branch of the channel in the popliteal fossa at Weizhong BL-40,
- descends through the gastrocnemius muscle, emerges posterior to the lateral malleolus at Kunlun BL-60, then follows along the fifth metatarsal bone to terminate at Zhiyin BL-67 at the lateral side of the tip of the fifth toe, where it meets with the Kidney channel.

*The Bladder primary channel connects with the following zangfu: Kidneys, Bladder.*

*The Bladder primary channel meets with other channels at the following points: Baihui DU-20, Shenting DU-24, Toulinqi GB-15, Qubin GB-7, Shuaigu GB-8, Tianchong GB-9, Fubai GB-10, Touqiaoyin GB-11, Wangu GB-12, Naohu DU-17, Dazhui DU-14, Taodao DU-13 and Huantiao GB-30. Note: although not mentioned in the classical pathway described above, the following*

points are also traditionally said to be meeting points with the Bladder channel: Binao L.I.-14, Naoshu SI-10 and Zhejin GB-23.

**THE BLADDER LUO-CONNECTING CHANNEL**

- separates from the primary channel at Feiyang BL-58 and connects with the Kidney channel.

**THE BLADDER DIVERGENT CHANNEL**

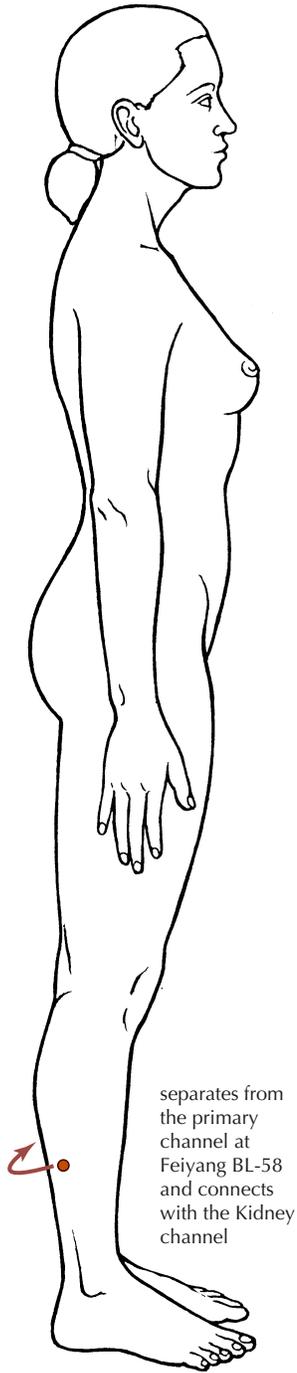
- diverges from the primary channel in the popliteal fossa and ascends to a point five cun inferior to the sacrum, then winds round the anus, connecting with the Bladder and dispersing in the Kidneys,
- ascends alongside the spine and disperses in the cardiac region, then emerges at the neck to rejoin the Bladder primary channel.

**THE BLADDER SINEW CHANNEL**

- originates at the little toe and ascends past the lateral malleolus, and then ascends to bind at the (lateral aspect of) the knee,
- another branch separates below the lateral malleolus and binds at the heel, then ascends along the Achilles tendon to the lateral aspect of the popliteal fossa,
- another branch separates from this branch in the calf (at the convergence of the two heads of the gastrocnemius muscle) and ascends to the medial aspect of the popliteal fossa,
- the two branches join in the gluteal region and ascend to bind at the buttock,
- the channel then ascends laterally along the spine to the nape of the neck, where a branch penetrates to bind at the root of the tongue,
- the main ascending branch continues upwards to bind at the occipital bone, and ascends over the crown of the head to bind at the bridge of the nose, then circles the eye and binds at the cheek bone,
- another branch separates on the back and ascends to the medial side of the posterior axillary crease, then binds at Jianyu L.I.-15,
- another branch crosses beneath the axilla and ascends the chest to emerge at the supraclavicular fossa, then ascends to bind at Wangu GB-12 behind the ear, and finally another branch, after emerging from the supraclavicular fossa, rises to the cheek bone alongside the nose.

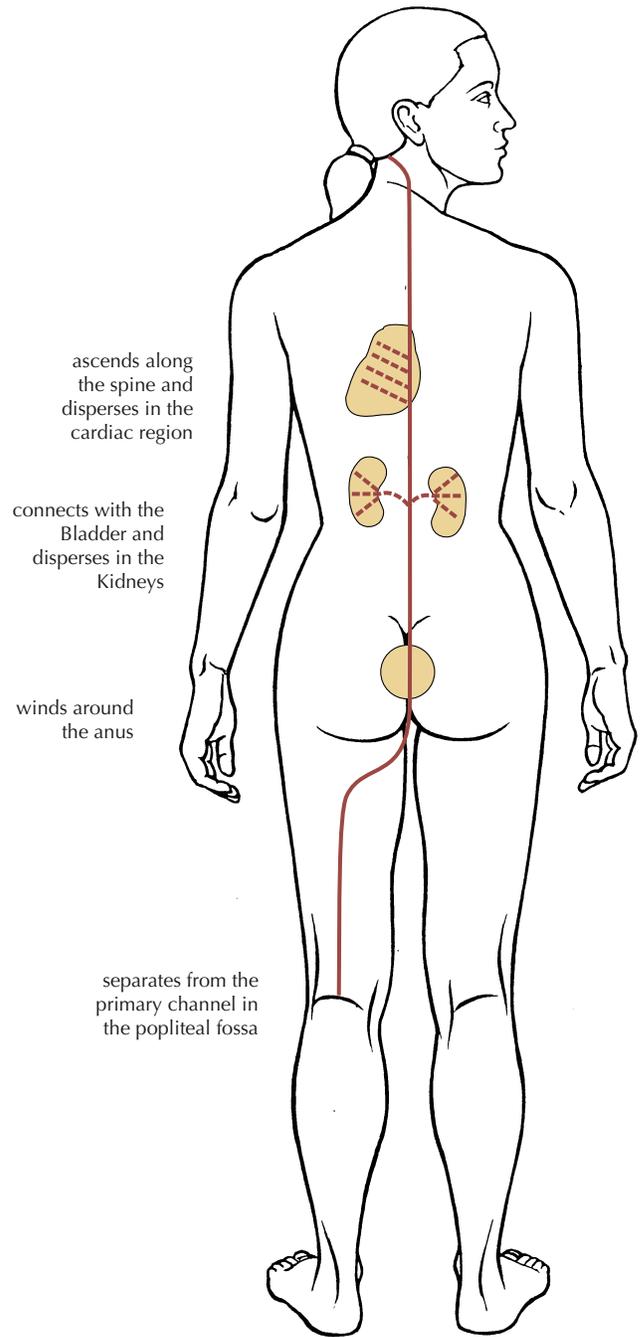
*Pathological symptoms of the Bladder sinew channel*

Strain of the little toe, pain and swelling of the heel, spasm of the popliteal region, opisthotonos, spasm and tension of the nape of the neck, inability to raise the shoulder, strain of the axilla, pain and strain of the supraclavicular fossa.



separates from the primary channel at Feiyang BL-58 and connects with the Kidney channel

The Bladder luo-connecting channel



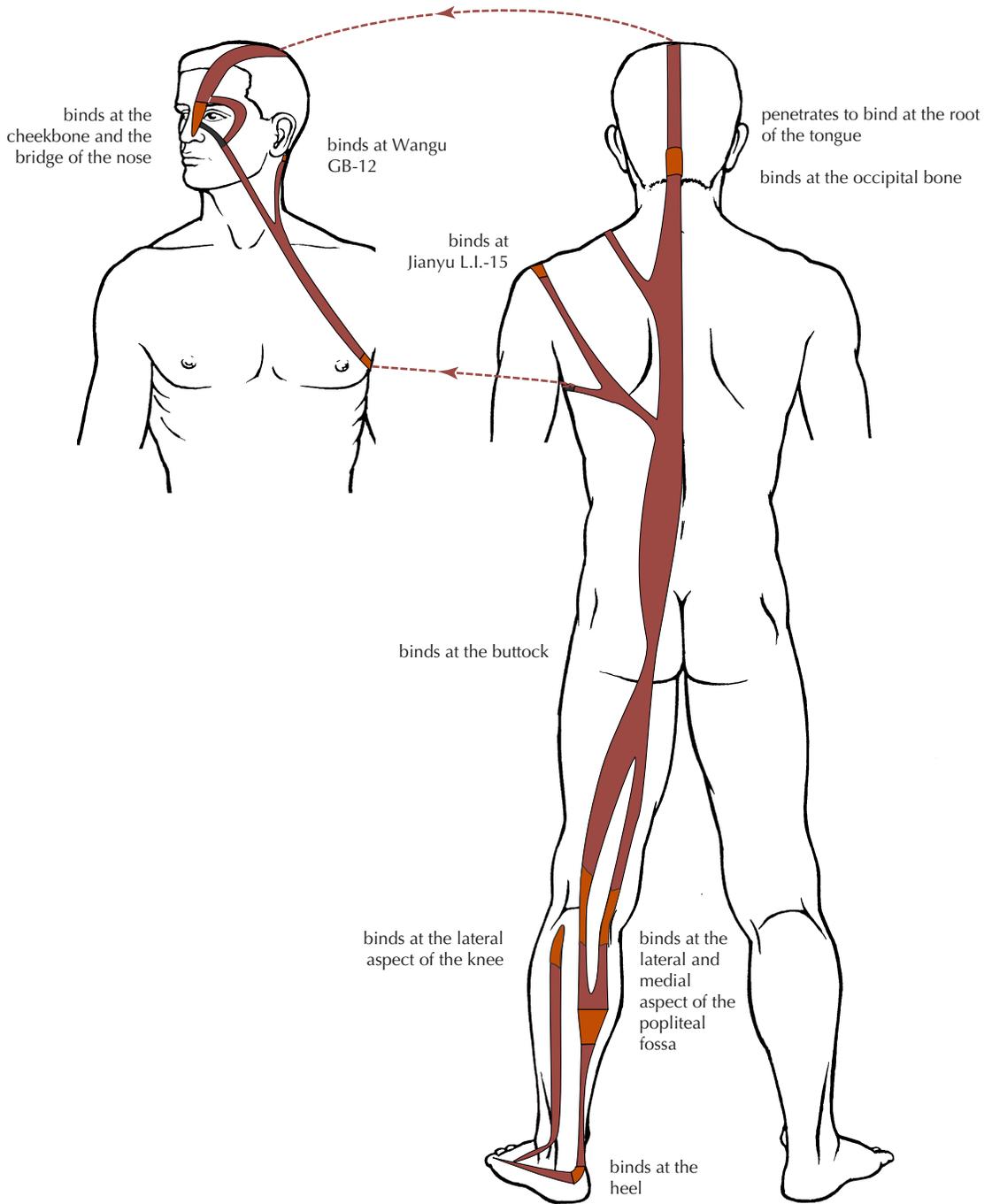
ascends along the spine and disperses in the cardiac region

connects with the Bladder and disperses in the Kidneys

winds around the anus

separates from the primary channel in the popliteal fossa

The Bladder divergent channel



The Bladder sinew channel

## DISCUSSION

The Bladder channel of foot taiyang channel is interiorly-exteriorly coupled with the Kidney channel, and paired with the Small Intestine channel of hand taiyang according to six channel theory. The Bladder-Kidney relationship is further strengthened by the fact that:

- the Bladder primary channel enters the Kidney zang.
- the Bladder primary channel meets the Kidney channel at Zhiyin BL-67.
- the Bladder divergent channel disperses in the Kidneys.
- the Bladder luo-connecting channel connects with the Kidney channel.

It is also important to note that:

- the Bladder primary channel begins at the inner canthus of the eye.
- the Bladder primary channel intersects the Governing vessel at points Taodao DU-13, Dazhui DU-14, Naohu DU-17 and Baihui DU-20, where it enters the brain.
- the Bladder primary channel descends paravertebrally in two lines, one at 1.5 cun lateral to the midline, the other at 3 cun lateral to the midline; the inner line includes the back-shu points of the twelve zangfu, as well as the hui-meeting points for blood and bones.
- the Bladder divergent channel winds around the anus
- the Bladder divergent channel enters the Heart
- the Bladder sinew channel passes beneath the axilla.

The function of the Bladder is to store fluid and via its qi transformation action to covert the waste into urine for excretion. Like the Small and Large Intestine and Sanjiao channels, however, there is little direct clinical relationship between the Bladder channel and the function of the Bladder fu. It is true that several points of the Bladder channel are important in the treatment of urinary diseases, but this is primarily due to the fact that they are i. back-shu points of the Sanjiao, Kidneys or Bladder (Sanjiaoshu BL-22, Shenshu BL-23 and Pangguangshu BL-28 respectively), ii. local points lying over the region of the Bladder (for example Ciliao BL-32), or iii. distal points with a special relationship to fluid transformation, for example Weiyang BL-39, the lower he-sea point of the Sanjiao.

Due to its length and the different regions of the body it traverses, points of the Bladder channel have a great range of actions and indications:

- The taiyang Bladder channel, with sixty-seven points, is the longest channel in the body. It ascends

over the head (yang) and then down the entire posterior, and hence most yang, portion of the body. Taiyang channel is the most superficial of the six channels and is therefore the first to be attacked by exterior wind. Wind is a yang pathogen, and both exterior and interior wind have the tendency to ascend to the head and brain. Many of the points of the Bladder channel, therefore, are important in clinical practice to eliminate both exterior and interior wind from the body.

- The Bladder channel enters the brain, whilst the Bladder divergent channel connects with the Heart. Since the time of the *Essential Questions*, Chinese medicine has recognised that disharmony of the brain or Heart, either singly or together, can give rise to psycho-emotional disorders (for a fuller discussion see the introductory discussion to the Governing vessel). Points of the Bladder channel on the head from Zanzhu BL-2 to BL-10, and on the foot from BL-60 to Zutonggu BL-66 all treat such disorders as mania and epilepsy. In addition certain of the back-shu points such as Feishu BL-13, Xinshu BL-15 and Ganshu BL-18 treat a variety of disorders of the spirit, in this case due to their action on the Lung, Heart and Liver zang as much as their effect on the Bladder channel itself.
- Points Jingming BL-1 (at the inner canthus of the eye) to Tianzhu BL-10 (on the nape of the neck) expel exterior wind from their local area, pacify interior wind and treat disorders of the eyes, nose, head and face.
- The points of the inner, medial portion of the Bladder channel on the back have an enormous variety of actions and indications. Starting with Dazhu BL-11, the hui-meeting point of bone, through to Pangguangshu BL-28, the back-shu point of the Bladder, these points have a profound effect on the zangfu and the various tissues, substances and sense organs of the body. Despite their express action on specific zangfu, however, some generalisations can be made. Points Dazhu BL-11 to Feishu BL-13 are able to expel exterior pathogens and regulate the Lung. Points Jueyinshu BL-14 and Xinshu BL-15 treat the Heart and spirit. Points Geshu BL-17 to Sanjiaoshu BL-22 treat disorders of the middle jiao (Stomach, Spleen, Liver and Gall Bladder). Points Shenshu BL-23 to Huiyang BL-35 and Baohuang BL-53 to Heyang BL-55 treat disorders of the Kidneys, lumbar region and lower jiao (intestines, Bladder, uterus, genitals, anus).

- Points of the outer, lateral, Bladder channel on the back from Fufen BL-41 (level with Fengmen BL-12) through to Zhishi BL-52 (level with Shenshu BL-23) have similar indications to the corresponding points of the inner Bladder channel, although they are generally less extensive in their actions and indications. Exceptions are Pohan BL-42 and Gaohuangshu BL-43 which have a profound effect on tonifying deficiency. It is well-known also that five of these points (Pohan BL-42, Shentang BL-44, Hunmen BL-47, Yishe BL-49 and Zhishi BL-52) are named after the five spiritual aspects. Despite the strong implication that these points may be used to treat disorders of these five aspects of a person's psycho-emotional being, however, there is scanty evidence in classical texts that they have been used for this purpose.
- Points on the posterior portion of the thigh from Chengfu BL-36 to Kunlun BL-60 treat disorders of the lumbar region, anus and leg.
- Feiyang BL-58, located on the calf, is the first distal point of the Bladder channel to have an effect on disorders of the head, and this action becomes more pronounced as the channel travels distally towards Zhiyin BL-67, the terminal point of the channel. The extreme yang nature of the taiyang (supreme yang) Bladder channel, coupled with its penetration of the head and brain, renders these points effective in the treatment of aggressive yang pathogens, whether in the form of exterior wind or heat which injure the upper part of the body, or in the form of interior wind, interior fire and uprising of yang which assault the head and brain. These points, therefore, are indicated in a variety of excess conditions affecting the head, brain and sense organs.
- In keeping with the general characteristics of the channels, especially the yang channels, the more distal the points, the stronger their effect on the channel as a whole rather than simply their local area. This may be observed in the indications for points Kunlun BL-60 to Jinggu BL-64, which treat disorders of the Bladder channel in the head, upper and lower back, upper and lower leg and foot.