

督脈

The Du Vessel

督乃陽脈之海其脈起於腎下胞中至於少腹乃下行於腰橫骨圍之中央系溺孔之端男子循莖下至篡女子絡陰器合篡間俱繞篡後屏翳穴（前陰後陰之間也）

The *du* is the sea of yang vessels. Its vessel originates from within the gestational membranes below the kidneys and reaches the lower abdomen where it travels downward to the lumbar area and circles the pubic bone, where it links with the end of the urethral opening. In men, it proceeds to the penis and then descends to reach the perineum. In women, a network travels to the genital organs and unites in the perineum. All [of these various pathways] encircle the perineum behind the Barrier Screen (CV-1) hole (between the anterior yin [urethra] and posterior yin [anus]).

別繞臀至少陰與太陽中絡者合少陰上股內廉由會陽（在陰尾尻骨兩旁凡二穴）貫脊會於長強穴在骶骨端與少陰會並脊裏上行歷腰腧（二十一椎下）陽關（十六椎下）命門（十四椎下）懸樞（十三椎下）脊中（十一椎下）中樞（十椎下）筋縮（九椎下）至陽（七椎下）靈臺（六椎下）神道（五椎下）身柱（三椎下）陶道（大椎下）大椎（一椎下）與手足三陽會合上啞門（項後入發際五分）會陽維入系舌本上至風府（項後入發際一寸大筋內宛宛中）會足太陽陽維同入腦中循腦戶（在枕骨上）強間（百會後三寸）後項（百會後一寸半）上巔歷百會（項中央旋毛中）前項（百會前一寸半）囟會（百舍前三寸即囟門）上星（囟會前一寸）至神庭（囟會前二寸直鼻上入發際五分）為足太陽督脈之會循額中至鼻柱經素膠（鼻準也）水溝（即人中）合手足陽明至兌端（在唇上端）入齦交（上齒逢中）与任脈足陽明交會而終凡三十一穴

A diverging branch encircles the buttocks to reach the lesser yin; along with the middle networks of the greater yang,¹ it then unites with the lesser yin and ascends the inner thigh. From the Meeting of Yang (BL-35) (on either side of the yin side of

the coccyx, two holes) it links with the spine to meet the Long Strong (GV-1) hole at the tip of the coccyx² where it meets with the lesser yin, merging into the spine, and travels upward.³ [It passes through] Lumbar Transport (GV-2) (below the 21st vertebrae), Lumbar Yang Pass (GV-3) (below the 16th vertebrae), Life Gate (GV-4) (below the 14th vertebrae), Suspended Pivot (GV-5) (below the 13th vertebrae), Spinal Center (GV-6) (below the 11th vertebrae), Central Pivot (GV-7) (below the 10th vertebrae), Sinew Contraction (GV-8) (below the 9th vertebrae), Extremity of Yang (GV-9) (below the 7th vertebrae), Spirit Tower (GV-10) (below the 6th vertebrae), Spirit Path (GV-11) (below the 5th vertebrae), Body Pillar (GV-12) (below the 3rd vertebrae),⁴ Kiln Path (GV-13) (below the large vertebrae),⁵ and Great Hammer (GV-14) (below the 1st vertebrae) where it meets with the three yang [channels] of both the hands and feet.⁶ From here, it ascends to Mute's Gate (GV-15) (on the nape of the neck, 5 *fen* inside the hairline), where it meets with the *yang wei* and enters [the head] to link with the root of the tongue. It then ascends to Wind House (GV-16) (on the nape of the neck, one *cun* within the hairline, in a depression within the large sinews) where it meets with the greater yang and *yang wei*, and together, they all enter into the brain.⁷ [The *du* vessel] then passes to Brain's Door (GV-17) (just above the occipital bone),⁸ Unyielding Space (GV-18) (three *cun* behind Hundred Convergences [GV-20]), Behind the Vertex (GV-19) (one-and-a-half *cun* behind Hundred Convergences), and ascends to the vertex and Hundred Convergences (GV-20),⁹ Before the Vertex, (GV-21) (one and a half *cun* in front of Hundred Convergences), Fontanel Meeting (GV-22) (three *cun* in front of Hundred Convergences; this is also called Fontanel Door), Upper Star (GV-23) (one *cun* in front of Fontanel Meeting) to arrive at Spirit Court (GV-24) (two *cun* in front of Fontanel Meeting, directly above the nose, five *fen* inside the hairline) where the foot greater yang and the *du* vessel meet.¹⁰ It then traverses the forehead to the bridge of the nose to connect with White Bone (GV-25) hole and Water Trough (GV-26) (also called Human Center)¹¹ where it meets with the hand and foot yang brightness to reach Extremity of the Mouth (GV-27) (at the margin of the upper lip) and finally enters Gum Intersection (GV-28) (on the upper gum line) where it intersects with the *ren* vessel and the foot yang brightness and terminates.¹² In all, there are 31 holes.

督脈別絡自長強走任脈者由少腹直上貫臍中央上貫心入喉上頤環
唇上系兩目之下中央會太陽於目內眥睛明穴（見陰蹻下）上額與
足厥陰同陰於巔入絡於腦

A branching network of the *du* vessel that travels from Long Strong (GV-1) to the *ren* vessel goes straight up from the lower abdomen and links with the center of the umbilicus, ascending to link with the heart. From here, it enters the pharynx, ascends to the cheek, and encircles the lips. It then ascends and connects to below the eyes on their midlines. It meets with the greater yang at the inner canthus at the Bright Eyes (BL-1) hole (see the end of the *yin qiao* [trajectory]).¹³ From here, it ascends to

the forehead and meets at the foot reversing yin at the vertex where it enters and networks with the brain.

又別自腦下項循肩胛與手足太陽少陽會於大杼（第一椎下兩旁去脊中一寸五分陷中）內挾脊抵腰中入循膂絡腎

Another branch from the brain goes down to the nape, proceeds along the scapula to meet the hand and foot greater yang and the lesser yin at Large Pillow (BL-11) (on either side of the 1st vertebrae in a depression one *cun* and five *fen* out from the middle of the spine). [From here,] it moves inside, hugging the spine to support the lower back, and proceeds along the backbone to network with the kidneys.

難經曰督脈住脈四尺五寸會共九尺

The *Classic of Difficulties* states: “The *du* and *ren* [vessels] are four *chi* and five *cun* [long] ... and altogether they make nine *chi*.”¹⁴

靈樞經曰頸中央之脈督脈也名曰風府

[Ch. 2 of] *Divine Pivot* states: “The vessel on the midline of the neck is the *du* vessel. It is called Wind Adobe (GV-16).”

張潔古曰督者都也為陽脈之都綱任者妊也為陰脈之妊養

Zhang Jie-Gu says that the *du* is the capital and ties together all the yang vessels. The *ren* is the pregnant female and nurtures all of the yin vessels.¹⁵

王海藏曰陰蹻陽蹻同起跟中乃氣並而相連任脈督脈同起中極之下乃水溝而相接

Wang Hai-Cang says that the *yin qiao* and *yang qiao* arise together from the heel. Their qi has merged [together] and is mutually connected. The *ren* vessel and *du* vessel arise from below the Central Pivot (GV-7) at the Water Ditch (GV-26) and connect with one another there.¹⁶

滑伯仁曰任督二脈一源而二峻一行於身之前一行於身之後人身之有任督猶天地之有子午可以分可以合分之以見陰陽之不離合之以見渾淪之無間一而二二而一者也

Hua Bo-Ren states: “The two vessels of the *ren* and *du* are but two branches with a single source. One travels along the front of the body and another travels along the back of the body. A person’s body has the *ren* and *du*, just as heaven and earth have *zi*

and *wu* [midday and midnight], which may be perceived as divided or united. Divide them and it is apparent that their yin and yang [aspects] cannot be separated. Unite them [and] it is apparent that they are coalesced without differentiation. The singular is plural, and the plural is singular.”¹⁷

李瀕湖曰任督二脈人身之子午也乃丹家陽火陰符升降之道坎水離火交媾之鄉故魏伯陽參同契雲上閉則稱有下閉則稱無無者以奉上有神德居此兩孔穴法金氣亦雙須

Li Bin-Hu says that the two vessels of the *ren* and *du* are the human body's *zi* and *wu* [midday and midnight]. They are the elixir cultivator's pathways for the ascent and descent of the yang fire and the yin talisman.¹⁸ They are the place of intersection of *kun* water and *li* fire. Therefore, Wei Bo-Yang, in his *Token for the Agreement of the Three*, states: “When the upper is closed,¹⁹ it is called being, and when the lower is closed, it is called nothingness. Nothingness is elevated to the upper [part or the body], and the spirit virtue resides in the upper [part of the body]. By means of this two-holed method, the golden qi also requires both [being and nothingness].”

崔希范天元入藥鏡雲上鵲橋下鵲橋天應星地應潮當根竅復命關貫尾閭通泥丸

Cui Xi-Fan in his *Mirror on the Admixture of Medicines to the Heavenly Origin* states: “There is an Upper Magpie Bridge and a Lower Magpie Bridge. Heaven resonates with the stars [above], and the earth resonates with the tides [below]. [One must] restore the root aperture and return to the Life Barrier, pass through the End Gate, and penetrate the Mud Ball.”

大道三享直指雲修丹之士身中一竅名曰玄牝正在乾之下坤之上震之西兌之東坎寓交媾之地在人身天地之正中八脈九竅十二經十五絡聯轆虛間一穴空懸黍珠

The Direct Teaching of the Great Way in Three Chapters states that the cultivators of the elixir are possessed of a premier aperture in the body, and this is called the Mysterious Female. “It is located directly below *qian*, above *kun*, to the west of *zhen*, and east of *dui*, and is the place where *kan* and *li* mate. It is right in the center of the body's heaven and earth; the eight vessels, nine orifices, 12 channels, and 15 networks are all interconnected in this one grotto in the gap of emptiness and suspended in the void like pearls of barley.”

醫書之任督二脈此元氣之所由生真息之所由超修丹之士不明此竅則真息不生神化無基也

The two vessels of the *ren* and *du* [mentioned] in medical texts are where the primal qi is engendered, and the place from which the true breath arises. If cultivators of the elixir lack understanding of this opening, then the true breath is not engendered, and the transformation of the spirit is without foundation.

俞琰註參同契雲人身血氣往來循環晝夜不停醫書有住督二脈人能
通此二脈則百脈皆通

Yu Yan's annotations to *Token to the Agreement of the Three* states that the circulation of qi and blood within the human body ebbs and flows day and night without ceasing. The medical texts have the two vessels of the *du* and *ren*. "If a person can open these two vessels, then all the hundreds of vessels can be open."

黃庭經言皆在心內運天經晝夜存之自長生

Scripture of the Yellow Court states: "Whoever circulates these heavenly channels within one's mind, protecting himself night and day, will extend one's life."²⁰

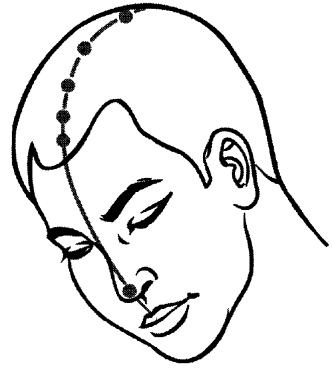
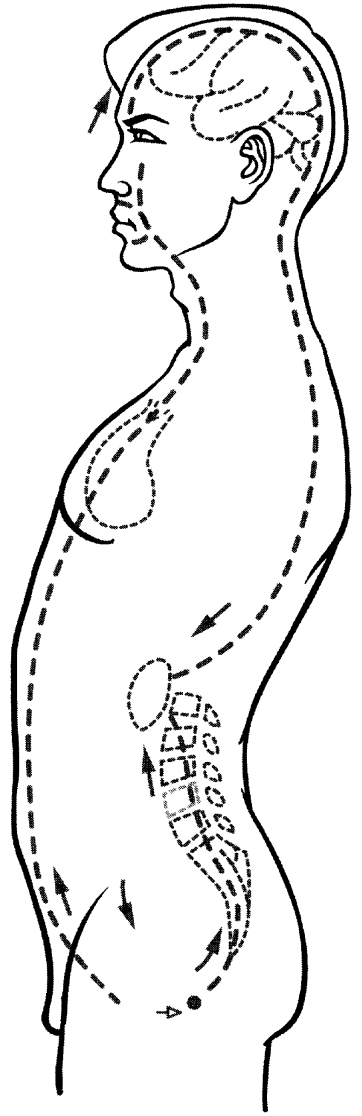
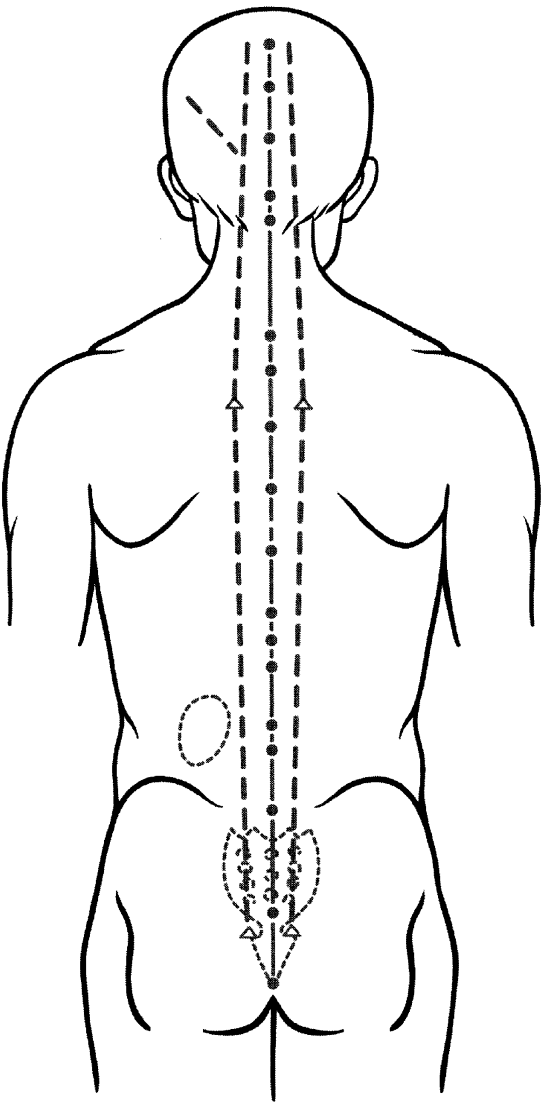
天經乃吾身之黃道呼吸往來於此也鹿運尾閭能通督脈龜納鼻息能
通任脈故二物皆長壽此數說皆丹家河車妙旨也而藥物火候自有別
傳

"The heavenly channels are our body's Yellow Pathway, and our respiration comes and goes in relation to these. Deer movement through the End Gate enables the opening of the *du* vessel. Tortoise inhalation through one's nose enables the opening of the *ren* vessel. Hence, these two animals prolong life.²¹ These numerous theories are derived from the sublime and secret teachings of the River Vehicle²² of the elixir cultivators. [The lore] of herbal products and the art of firing [metals in alchemical preparation] are transmitted separately [in other texts]."²³

王海藏曰張平叔言鉛乃北方正氣一點初生之真陽為丹母其蟲為龜
即坎之二陰也地軸也一陽為蛇天根也陽生於子藏之命門元氣之所
系出入於此其用在臍下為天地之根玄牝之門通厥陰分三峻為三車
一念之非降而為漏一念之是守而成鉛升而接離補而成乾陰歸養化
是以還元至虛至靜道法自然飛升而仙

Wang Hai-Cang says that: According to Zhang Ping-Shu, lead is the upright qi of the northern direction that represents a drop of emerging true yang, [and is a straight] yang line in the middle of the trigram *kan* and is the expression of initial growth producing the Maternal Elixir; its bug is the tortoise, resulting in the two yin [lines] of [the trigram] *kan*. This [central line] is the earth's axis. This first yang line is the snake and the root of heaven. Yang is engendered in the seed-store of the life gate,

that which connects the primal qi; going and coming thus, it functions below the umbilicus as the root of heaven and earth, the gate of the Mysterious Female flowing through the reversing yin, and dividing into three branches to become three vehicles. If one harbors incorrect thoughts, then it descends and leaks out. If one maintains correct thoughts, then it is stored and becomes lead. It ascends and reunites with *li*. It is further enhanced and becomes *qian*. The restoration of yin and transformation of yang is what facilitates the return to the origin. Having achieved emptiness and achieved quietude, thereby expressing the Way with spontaneity, [the adept] soars up and becomes transcendent.²⁴



The *Du* Vessel

督脈為病

Diseases of the *Du* Vessel

素問骨空論雲督脈生疾從少腹上衝心而痛不得前後為衝疝女子為不孕癰閉遺溺嗑乾治在骨上（謂腰橫骨上毛際中曲骨穴也）甚者在臍下營（臍下一寸，陰交穴也）

[Ch. 60 of] *Basic Questions*, “The Discourse on the Bones and Holes,” states: “When the *du* vessel is afflicted,¹ [qi] surges upward from the lower abdomen to the heart and produces pain. One cannot urinate or defecate. This is surging bulging.² In women, this presents as infertility,³ dribbling urinary blockage, urinary frequency, and a dry throat ... treat this above the bone (this refers to the Curved Bone (CV-2) hole that is located at the midline of the hair line above the pubic bone). In severe cases, treat the barracks below the umbilicus (one *cun* below the umbilicus is the Yin Intersection [CV-7] hole).”⁴

王啟玄曰此乃任衝二脈之病不知何以屬之督脈

Wang Qi-Xuan says, “This is a disease of the two vessels of the *ren* and *chong*. I do not know how this could pertain to the *du* vessel.”

李瀕湖曰督脈雖行於背而別絡自長強走任脈者則由少腹直上貫臍中貫心入喉上頤環唇而入於目之內眥故顯此諸證啟玄蓋未深考爾

Li Bin-Hu says, although the *du* vessel traverses the spine, a diverging network vessel issues from Long Strong (GV-1) to the *ren* vessel, [so the *du* channel] travels from the lower abdomen directly upward, linking with the center of the umbilicus, linking with the heart and entering the pharynx, ascending to the cheeks, encircling the lips and entering the inner canthus of the eye.⁵ Hence, [the cause of] all of the above symptoms is obvious. [Wang] Qi-Xuan has not considered this issue very deeply.

素問曰督脈實則脊強反折虛則頭重高搖之挾脊之有過者取之所別也

[Ch. 60 of] *Basic Questions* states: “The *du* vessel [...] when excessive, presents with

arched-back rigidity. When deficient, it presents with heavy-headedness such that one wobbles one's head [in an attempt to hold it up], and if there is pathological change [in the diverging network of the *du* vessel] that hugs the spine, select the diverging [hole].”⁶

秦越人難經曰督脈為病脊強而厥

Qin Yue-Ren, in his *Classic of Difficulties*, states: “When the *du* vessel becomes diseased, there is spinal rigidity and reversal.”⁷

王海藏曰此病宜用羌活獨活防風荊芥細辛藁本黃連大黃附子烏頭蒼耳之類

Wang Hai-Cang says that, for this disease, it is appropriate to use medicinals in the class of *Notopterygii Rhizoma seu Radix (qiang huo)*, *Angelicae pubescentis Radix (du huo)*, *Saposhnikovia Radix (fang feng)*, *Schizonepetae Herba (jing jie)*, *Asari Radix et Rhizoma (xi xin)*, *Ligustici Rhizoma (gao ben)*, *Coptidis Rhizoma (huang lian)*, *Rhei Radix et Rhizoma (da huang)*, *Aconiti Radix lateralis preparata (fu zi)*, *Aconti Radix (wu tou)*, and *Xanthii Fructus (cang er zi)*.⁸

張仲景金匱云脊強者五瘥之總名其證卒口噤背反張而癱瘓諸藥不已可灸身柱大椎陶道穴

Zhang Zhong-Jing, in his *[Essentials from the] Golden Cabinet*, says that spinal rigidity is the general appellation for the five [types of] rigidity. Its symptoms include trismus, arched-back rigidity, and contractures. When medicinals are ineffective for these [symptoms] one may perform moxa on the Body Pillar (GV-12), Great Hammer (GV-14), and Kiln Path (GV-13) holes.

又曰瘥家脈築築而弦直上下行

[Zhang Zhong-Jing] also states: “The pulse of those with rigidity is disturbed and wiry; its movement beats straight up and down.”

王叔和脈經曰尺寸俱浮直上直下此為督脈腰背強痛不得俯仰大人癱病小兒風癩

Wang Shu-He in his *Pulse Classic* states: “When the pulses from the proximal to the distal positions are all floating [beating] straight up and straight down, this is the *du* pulse. [When the pulse is] perturbed in this way, [the patient] suffers from rigidity and pain of the entire back and will be unable to bend forward or backward. Adults will have seizures, and children will have wind seizures.”⁹

又曰脈來中央浮直上下動者督脈也動苦腰背膝寒大人癲小兒癰宜灸頂上三壯

[Wang Shu-He] also states: “A pulse that arrives as floating in the middle positions pulsing directly up and down is the *du* pulse. [When the pulse is] perturbed in this way, [the patient] suffers from cold of the back and knees, adults will have seizures, and children will have wind seizures. In such cases, it is appropriate to administer three cones of moxibustion to the vertex.”¹⁰

素問風論曰風氣循風府而上則為腦風風入系頭則為目風眼寒

[Ch. 42 of] *Basic Questions*, “The Discourse on Wind,” states: “Wind qi proceeds to the Wind House (GV-16) and ascends, which then becomes brain wind. Wind may [also] enter and link to the head, which then becomes eye wind and eye cold.”¹¹

王啟玄云腦戶乃督脈足太陽之會故也

Wang Qi-Xuan states: “Brain’s Door (GV-17) is the meeting [hole] of the *du* vessel and the foot greater yang”