

# Neidan and the Nilpotent Vacuum The Taoist Internal Alchemy Tradition as an Empirical Discovery of Coherence Hierarchy

J. Konstapel, Leiden, 3-6-2026

## Abstract

The Taoist tradition of Neidan (內丹, internal alchemy) describes a systematic practice of transforming the Three Treasures — Jing (essence), Qi (energy), and Shen (spirit) — through three dantian energy centres, ultimately returning to the primordial unity of the Tao. This paper argues that Neidan is not a metaphorical or purely spiritual system but an empirical discovery, developed over two millennia of systematic inner observation, of the coherence hierarchy described in the nilpotent quaternion vacuum model (Konstapel, 2026b, 2026c). The three-stage transformation Jing → Qi → Shen → Wu corresponds precisely to the domain transitions  $D_7 \rightarrow D_8 \rightarrow D_9 \rightarrow D_{10}$  of the biological coherence hierarchy, and the ultimate return to Tao corresponds to the vacuum baseline restoration described in the coherence framework. The source of the Neidan system is traced through its textual lineage — from the Huangdi Neijing (~3rd century BCE) and the Tao Te Ching through the Cantong qi (Wei Boyang, ~150 CE) to the Song-dynasty codification of Zhang Boduan and the Qing-dynasty synthesis of Liu Yiming — revealing a consistent underlying cosmological claim: the human body is a microcosm of the vacuum, and the alchemical transformation is the realignment of the organism's coherence field with its vacuum baseline. The paper identifies the Cantong qi's three-subject integration — cosmology (Yi Jing), Taoism (wu wei), and alchemy — as structurally identical to the nilpotent condition's integration of space, antispaces, and their coupling. Six testable predictions are proposed that connect the Neidan tradition to measurable bioelectric and neurophysiological phenomena.

## 1. Introduction: Two Traditions, One Structure

Two independent traditions have arrived at structurally identical descriptions of the same underlying process.

The first is the Taoist tradition of Neidan, developed in China over approximately two thousand years of systematic inner observation and transmitted through a living lineage of masters and disciples. Its central claim: the human body contains three primary energy centres — the three dantians — through which three fundamental substances — Jing, Qi, and Shen — can be refined in sequence, ultimately dissolving into the primordial emptiness of the Tao. The body is a microcosm. The alchemical transformation within the body mirrors the cosmological process by which the universe unfolds from and returns to its source.

The second is the coherence framework developed in the companion papers to this publication (Konstapel, 2026b, 2026c, 2026d). Its central claim: the organism is an electromagnetic coherence field organised across nineteen eigenvalue domains, from the quantum vacuum to conscious

experience. Health is coherence; disease is wrong stability. The highest form of health is the return of the organism's field to its vacuum baseline — the coherence state that is uniquely and precisely that individual's own.

These two traditions have developed independently, in different cultures, using different languages and different methodologies. They have arrived at the same structure.

This paper does not claim that the ancient Chinese masters knew quantum field theory. It claims something more interesting: that two thousand years of systematic inner observation — conducted with the body as the instrument — independently discovered the coherence hierarchy that the nilpotent vacuum model derives from first principles. The Neidan tradition is empirical data. Its systematic structure is a constraint on any adequate physical theory of consciousness and biological coherence.

## 2. The Source: Tracing the Lineage to Its Root

### 2.1 The pre-textual foundation

The Neidan tradition traces its cosmological roots to two foundational texts that predate its formal emergence by centuries.

The **Huangdi Neijing** (黃帝內經, Yellow Emperor's Classic of Internal Medicine, ~3rd century BCE) establishes the cosmological framework within which Neidan operates: the human body as a microcosm of heaven and earth, governed by the same five phases and yin-yang dynamics as the cosmos. The Neijing is not an alchemical text — it is a medical text — but its cosmological premise is the ground upon which all subsequent Neidan theory stands. The body is not a closed system. It is an interface between the individual and the cosmic field.

The **Tao Te Ching** (道德經, Laozi, ~6th-4th century BCE) provides the ontological foundation: the Tao as the unnameable source from which all things emerge and to which all things return. Chapter 16 states: "Returning to the root is called stillness; stillness is called returning to one's destiny." This is not metaphor. It is a precise description of what the coherence framework calls vacuum baseline restoration — the return of the organism's coherence field to its fundamental eigenstate.

The key passage is Chapter 1: "The Tao that can be named is not the eternal Tao." This corresponds directly to Rowlands' nilpotent condition: the vacuum state that can be fully specified is not the true vacuum. The true vacuum is  $\emptyset = \sim\emptyset$  — the self-cancelling totality that contains all possibilities without being any of them.

### 2.2 The Cantong qi: the first synthesis

The **Cantong qi** (周易參同契, The Seal of the Unity of the Three, Wei Boyang, ~150 CE) is the foundational text of the alchemical tradition that eventually produced Neidan. Pregadio's authoritative analysis establishes that the Cantong qi is concerned not with one but with three subjects simultaneously: cosmology (the system of the Yi Jing), Taoism (the way of wu wei or non-doing), and alchemy — and joins them into a single unified doctrine (Pregadio, 2011).

This three-subject integration is structurally identical to the nilpotent condition's integration of three elements: the space-component field (cosmology — the observable structure of the universe), the antispace-component field (Taoism — the non-observable complement), and their coupling (alchemy — the transformation process that realigns them).

The Cantong qi's title is itself a cosmological claim. Cantong (參同) means "the three are unified." The three are: the Yi Jing's cosmological system, the Taoist principle of wu wei, and the alchemical practice. Their unity is not a philosophical position — it is an algebraic identity. The nilpotent condition  $N \cdot \tilde{N} = 0$  states precisely this: the three aspects of the vacuum (space, antispace, and their coupling) are unified in a single self-cancelling totality.

Wei Boyang's famous account of testing his pill of immortality on a dog — which died, after which Wei and a loyal disciple apparently also died, then all three revived as immortals — is best understood as a description of the phaseonium transition: the dissolution of the ordinary space-dominant consciousness (apparent death) and the emergence of full dual-space coherence (resurrection as immortal). The dog, representing instinctive non-rational awareness, crosses the threshold first.

### 2.3 The Tang-dynasty masters: Zhongli Quan and Lü Dongbin

The transmission attributed to Zhongli Quan (鍾離權, ~2nd-8th century CE, dates disputed) and his disciple Lü Dongbin (呂洞賓, 796-1016 CE) marks the transition from alchemical theory to systematic practice. Their joint text, the **Zhong-Lü Chuandao ji** (鍾呂傳道集, Record of the Transmission of the Dao from Zhongli to Lü), establishes the three-stage refinement process as a practical curriculum:

1. **Lian Jing Hua Qi** (煉精化氣): Refining essence into energy — the transformation at the lower dantian
2. **Lian Qi Hua Shen** (煉氣化神): Refining energy into spirit — the transformation at the middle dantian
3. **Lian Shen Huan Xu** (煉神還虛): Refining spirit into emptiness — the transformation at the upper dantian, returning to the Tao

A fourth stage is sometimes added:

4. **Lian Xu He Dao** (煉虛合道): Refining emptiness into union with the Tao — the complete dissolution of the individual field into the vacuum

This four-stage sequence corresponds with precision to the coherence framework's treatment of  $D_7$  through  $D_{10}$  and the phaseonium transition. The lower dantian is the cellular and tissue coherence level ( $D_7$ - $D_8$ ); the middle dantian is the organism-level autonomic integration ( $D_9$ ); the upper dantian is the consciousness domain ( $D_{10}$ ); and the dissolution into emptiness is the vacuum baseline restoration — the return to  $\emptyset$ .

### 2.4 Zhang Boduan: the Southern Lineage codification

**Zhang Boduan** (張伯端, 987-1082 CE) is considered the founder of the Southern Lineage (Nanzong) of Neidan and the author of the **Wuzhen pian** (悟真篇, Awakening to Reality), the most widely studied Neidan text after the Cantong qi.

Zhang's contribution is the explicit identification of the alchemical process with cosmological principles. His central claim: the Golden Elixir (Jindan, 金丹) is not produced by the practitioner — it is revealed when the practitioner's interference with the natural process ceases. The elixir is the natural state of the system; practice removes the obstructions to its emergence.

This is the coherence framework's attractor-relaxation principle stated in alchemical language. The false attractor is the obstruction. The practice does not create health — it removes the wrong stability and allows the system to return to its natural eigenstate.

Zhang's famous verse: "If you wish to know the medicine's location, it is right here in your body — do not seek it elsewhere." The vacuum baseline is not achieved by adding something. It is revealed by removing the wrong stability.

## 2.5 Liu Yiming: the Qing-dynasty synthesis

**Liu Yiming** (劉一明, 1734-1821) produced the most philosophically systematic synthesis of the Neidan tradition. His extensive commentary on the Cantong qi (1799) and his independent works — including the **Xiuzhen biannan** (修真辨難, Discriminations on Difficult Points in Cultivating Reality) — establish Neidan as a complete cosmological system, not merely a practice.

Liu's central contribution is the explicit connection between the macrocosmic and microcosmic: the same process that unfolds the universe from the Tao governs the alchemical transformation within the body. The body is not a metaphor for the cosmos. It is an instance of the same algebraic structure operating at a different scale.

Liu identifies two aspects of every Neidan operation, corresponding exactly to the URS conserve and create operations of Rowlands' Universal Rewrite System:

- **Ming** (命, Destiny/Existence): the space-component process — what can be observed, measured, and cultivated through physical practice
- **Xing** (性, Nature/Spirit): the antispace-component process — the non-observable complement that gives the practice its depth

Liu's insistence that both must be cultivated simultaneously — neither alone is sufficient — is the algebraic statement that the nilpotent condition requires both  $N$  and  $\tilde{N}$ : neither the space-component nor the antispace-component alone constitutes a complete description.

## 3. The Three Dantians as Coherence Domains

### 3.1 Structural correspondence

The three dantian system of Neidan maps precisely onto three domains of the biological coherence hierarchy:

Dantian	Location	Treasure	Transformation	Coherence domain	Measurable quantity
Lower (下丹田)	Below navel	Jing (essence)	Jing → Qi	D <sub>7</sub> –D <sub>8</sub> : cellular and tissue coherence	Membrane potential, mitochondrial gradient, HRV baseline

Middle (中丹田)	Heart centre	Qi (energy)	Qi → Shen	D <sub>9</sub> : organism-level autonomic integration	HRV spectral gap, cardiac-neural coupling
Upper (上丹田)	Third eye / crown	Shen (spirit)	Shen → Wu	D <sub>10</sub> : consciousness domain	EEG theta-gamma coupling, cross-frequency coherence

### 3.2 The lower dantian as cellular coherence

The lower dantian is described in Neidan texts as the primary alchemical furnace — the site where Jing (essence, identified with sexual energy, bone marrow, and vital substance) is conserved and refined. The classical instruction is: do not deplete Jing through excessive expenditure; instead, conserve and redirect it upward through the microcosmic orbit.

In the coherence framework, Jing corresponds to cellular coherence — the electromagnetic field configuration of the cell maintained through mitochondrial oscillations, membrane potential, and cytoskeletal vibration. Depletion of Jing corresponds to cellular coherence disruption: mitochondrial damage, membrane potential collapse, loss of the oscillatory coupling that sustains cellular phase relationships.

The microcosmic orbit (小周天, Xiao Zhoutian) — the circulation of Qi through the Du (督) and Ren (任) meridians — is the coherence coupling between the cellular level and the tissue/organ level: the upward transmission of cellular coherence into the organism's wider field.

### 3.3 The middle dantian as autonomic integration

The middle dantian at the heart centre is the seat of Qi — described in Neidan texts as the dynamic energy that circulates through the meridian network, regulating the organism's internal environment and its relationship to the external world. The middle dantian is explicitly connected to emotional regulation, heart function, and the balance between yin and yang in the organism's internal ecology.

In the coherence framework, this is D<sub>9</sub>: the organism-level autonomic integration domain, whose spectral gap is directly measured by heart rate variability. The cardiac-autonomic network is the highest-bandwidth coupling hub of the organism's coherence field — the precise organ through which the cellular oscillations of the lower dantian are integrated into organism-level coherence.

The Neidan instruction to calm the heart-mind (心, xin) before advancing in practice is the clinical instruction to restore the HRV spectral gap before introducing perturbation-based practices. A heart-mind that is disturbed — corresponding to low HRV spectral gap and sympathetic dominance — cannot transmit the cellular coherence upward. The middle dantian must be stable before the upper can be approached.

### 3.4 The upper dantian as consciousness threshold

The upper dantian at the crown or third eye is the seat of Shen — spirit, consciousness, the luminous awareness that observes without being identified with any particular content. The transformation Lian Shen Huan Xu (refining spirit into emptiness) is the dissolution of the self-referential loop of ordinary consciousness into the wider field of the Tao.

In the coherence framework, this is the phaseonium transition at  $D_{10}$ : the threshold at which the cross-boundary coherence between space and antispaces components reaches the critical value  $C^*$ , and the system can no longer be described purely in terms of its space-component projection. Experience arises as a phase property of the dual-space field. The dissolution of ordinary consciousness is not destruction — it is the recognition that the ordinary self is a local attractor in a field that extends far beyond it.

## 4. The Tao as Vacuum Baseline

The ultimate aim of Neidan is return to the Tao — the nameless, formless source from which all things emerge and to which all things return. Classical texts describe this as a state that cannot be conceptualised, that contains all possibilities without being any of them, that is simultaneously full and empty.

This is  $\emptyset = \sim\emptyset$  — the nilpotent vacuum state.

The Tao Te Ching's Chapter 40: "Return is the movement of the Tao." The coherence framework's vacuum baseline restoration is the return movement of the organism's field to its eigenstate in the nilpotent vacuum — the configuration that is uniquely and precisely that individual's own, set by the boundary conditions at birth, obscured by decades of false attractors and incompatible entrainment, and recoverable through the systematic removal of wrong stability.

The Neidan masters did not know about quaternion algebra or eigenvalue distributions. They knew — through direct observation, conducted with the body as the instrument, over two thousand years of accumulated practice — that there is a state of the human organism that is its natural condition, that it can be obscured but not destroyed, and that the path back to it requires not the addition of anything new but the removal of everything that is not it.

Solve et coagula. Dissolution and reintegration. The Neidan process and the coherence framework describe the same movement in different languages.

## 5. The Schepper: Who Created the System?

The question of who created the Neidan system is answered differently at three levels.

**At the historical level:** no single creator. The tradition emerges through a lineage of practitioners who contributed successive layers of systematisation: Wei Boyang provided the cosmological integration, Zhongli Quan and Lü Dongbin provided the practical curriculum, Zhang Boduan provided the Southern Lineage codification, Liu Yiming provided the philosophical synthesis. Each built on the previous, none invented from nothing.

**At the cosmological level:** the Neidan tradition's own answer. The Cantong qi explicitly states that the system was not invented by Wei Boyang — it was discovered. The cosmological principles encoded in the Yi Jing, the Tao Te Ching, and the alchemical tradition are not human creations. They are descriptions of how the universe actually works. The creator of the system is the Tao itself — the vacuum that unfolds according to its own algebraic necessity.

**At the physical level:** the nilpotent vacuum. The hierarchy Jing → Qi → Shen → Wu is not an arbitrary classification system. It corresponds to the eigenvalue structure of the vacuum field at the scales of cellular, tissue, organism, and consciousness organisation. The Bronze Mean thresholds  $B_3 = 13$  (cellular autopoiesis) and  $B_4 = 43$  (recursive self-reference) mark the phase boundaries that the Neidan tradition identified through practice as the lower and upper dantian transformation thresholds. The system was not created by any human intelligence. It was read off from the structure of the vacuum by practitioners who were sufficiently coherent to perceive it directly.

This is the deepest implication of the isomorphism between Neidan and the nilpotent vacuum model: the Taoist masters were doing physics. Not with instruments or mathematics, but with the most sensitive instrument available — the human organism itself, calibrated through decades of systematic practice to perceive the eigenvalue structure of its own vacuum field.

## 6. The Microcosmic Orbit as Coherence Protocol

The microcosmic orbit (小周天) is the most fundamental practical technique of Neidan: the cultivation of a continuous circulation of Qi through the Du meridian (spine, ascending) and the Ren meridian (front of body, descending), forming a closed loop of energy circulation.

In the coherence framework, the microcosmic orbit is a coherence-restoration protocol that operates on the vertical axis of the biological coherence hierarchy:

The **ascending Du meridian** corresponds to the upward transmission of cellular coherence ( $D_7$ ) through tissue integration ( $D_8$ ) to organism-level autonomic integration ( $D_9$ ) — the refinement of Jing into Qi.

The **descending Ren meridian** corresponds to the downward projection of organism-level coherence back into the cellular level — the stabilisation of the lower domains by the higher. In the coherence framework, this is the top-down regulatory signal: the organism's spectral gap at  $D_9$  determines which cellular configurations at  $D_7$  are stable. High spectral gap at the organism level stabilises and protects cellular coherence.

The closed loop of the microcosmic orbit is therefore the coherence coupling between adjacent levels of the hierarchy — the upward refinement and downward stabilisation that constitutes the normal healthy operation of the organism's coherence field. When the loop is interrupted — by false attractors, by low spectral gap, by depletion of Jing — the organism loses its vertical coherence coupling. Cellular processes become decoupled from organism-level regulation. The system fragments.

Restoring the microcosmic orbit is restoring the vertical coherence coupling. This is why the most fundamental Neidan instruction is: first establish the microcosmic orbit, then advance. Without it, all higher practice is groundless.

## 7. Neidan and the Personal Blueprint

The Neidan tradition's insistence on individual transmission — from master to disciple, in person, within a living lineage — reflects a physical reality that the coherence framework makes explicit: the path of practice is individual.

Every practitioner has a different coherence topology — a different distribution of eigenvalues across the domains of the hierarchy. The lower dantian transformation threshold (where Jing becomes Qi) occurs at a different intensity of practice for different individuals, depending on their cellular coherence eigenvalue at  $D_7$ . The middle dantian transformation (where Qi becomes Shen) requires a different quality of heart-mind stability depending on the organism-level spectral gap at  $D_9$ . The upper dantian dissolution (where Shen returns to Wu) approaches differently depending on the strength of the antispace coupling at  $D_{10}$ .

A master who has traversed the full path can perceive the student's coherence topology directly — not through intellectual analysis but through field resonance. The master's own coherence field, stabilised at or near the vacuum baseline, resonates with the student's field and can perceive where the student's eigenvalue structure creates obstacles and where it creates openings. This is what transmission means in the Neidan tradition: not the transfer of information but the direct coherence coupling between master and disciple that allows the master's field to provide the reference signal against which the student's field can calibrate.

The Personal Blueprint (Konstapel, 2026d) is the instrumental operationalisation of what the Neidan master perceives directly: a measurable description of the individual's coherence topology that makes the path of practice specific to that individual.

## 8. Testable Predictions

**Prediction 1 — Microcosmic orbit correlates with HRV-EEG vertical coupling** Practitioners who report successful establishment of the microcosmic orbit should show significantly higher coupling between HRV spectral gap ( $D_9$ ) and gamma-band EEG coherence ( $D_{10}$ ) than non-practitioners or beginning practitioners. The coupling coefficient should increase monotonically with years of practice. Testable against existing practitioner cohorts with combined HRV-EEG measurement.

**Prediction 2 — Lower dantian practice elevates cellular coherence markers** Sustained lower dantian practice (abdominal breathing, Jing conservation, microcosmic orbit establishment) should produce measurable increases in mitochondrial efficiency, membrane potential stability, and cellular  $Ca^{2+}$  oscillation regularity — the cellular coherence markers of  $D_7$ . Testable in controlled studies of long-term practitioners versus matched controls using mitochondrial function assays and live-cell imaging.

**Prediction 3 — Upper dantian practice produces phaseonium EEG signature** Advanced practitioners reporting access to the upper dantian transformation (Lian Shen Huan Xu) should show the phaseonium EEG signature: a non-linear increase in long-range theta coherence (4–8 Hz) combined with decreased local gamma activity, consistent with the phase transition from space-dominant to dual-space consciousness described in Konstapel (2026e). Testable against existing advanced practitioner EEG datasets.

**Prediction 4 — Bronze Mean voltage thresholds in dantian activation** If the three dantian transformation thresholds correspond to the Bronze Mean thresholds  $B_3 = 13$  and  $B_4 = 43$  in the coherence hierarchy, then the bioelectric voltage gradients at the three dantian locations during active practice should show ratios approximating  $\beta \approx 3.303$  between successive activation thresholds. Testable through focused bioelectric measurement during Neidan practice sessions.

**Prediction 5 — Master-disciple coherence coupling measurable** The field resonance between master and disciple during transmission should be measurable as simultaneous HRV spectral gap synchronisation and EEG theta coherence between master and disciple, exceeding chance-level coupling. This is the physical measurement of what the tradition calls transmission. Testable through synchronised HRV-EEG measurement of master-disciple pairs during practice.

**Prediction 6 — Neidan practice stratification by Personal Blueprint** Individuals with high eigenvalue at  $D_7$  (cellular coherence) should progress more rapidly through lower dantian practice. Individuals with high antispace coupling at  $D_{10}$  should progress more rapidly through upper dantian practice. Blueprint measurement at baseline should predict practice trajectory. Testable in a prospective cohort study of beginning practitioners with baseline Blueprint measurement and practice outcome assessment at 1 and 3 years.

## 9. Discussion

### 9.1 The empirical status of Neidan

The standard academic treatment of Neidan oscillates between two inadequate positions: either dismissing it as pre-scientific metaphor, or treating it as a purely cultural-religious phenomenon with no truth-claim about physical reality.

This paper proposes a third position: Neidan is an empirical tradition — a systematic body of knowledge generated through controlled inner observation, transmitted through a rigorous lineage system that functions as peer review, and refined over two thousand years through the iterative testing of its claims against practice outcomes.

The methodology is unusual by the standards of modern science: the instrument is the practitioner's own organism rather than an external measuring device, and the data are phenomenological rather than quantitative. But the epistemological structure is sound: systematic observation, transmission of methods, intersubjective verification through lineage, and iterative refinement of the theory based on practice outcomes.

The isomorphism between the Neidan system and the nilpotent vacuum model does not validate Neidan by reducing it to physics. It does the opposite: it validates the nilpotent vacuum model by showing that its predictions were independently discovered by a completely different methodology operating over a far longer timeframe.

### 9.2 The question of the source

The question of the Neidan tradition's ultimate source — what the paper calls "the schepper" — points to the most important implication of the isomorphism.

If the Neidan hierarchy corresponds to the eigenvalue structure of the nilpotent vacuum, then the Taoist masters did not invent a system. They discovered a structure that exists independently of any human tradition. The source of the Neidan system is the same as the source of the coherence hierarchy: the algebraic necessity of the nilpotent condition.

The vacuum creates by self-differentiation — by the recursive application of its own self-cancelling structure, generating successive layers of coherence from  $\emptyset = \sim\emptyset$  upward. The Tao Te Ching says: "The Tao gives birth to one, one gives birth to two, two gives birth to three, three gives birth to ten thousand things." The nilpotent operator says the same: the vacuum self-reference generates the Klein-Gordon wave equation, which generates harmonic modes, which generate the coherence hierarchy, which generates the nineteen domains, which generates life, consciousness, and the capacity to observe the process.

The schepper is the vacuum. The Tao is the vacuum. They are the same structure described in two languages across twenty-five centuries.

### **9.3 Why the tradition requires living transmission**

The Neidan tradition's insistence on living transmission — and its explicit warning that written texts alone cannot convey the practice — reflects a physical constraint that the coherence framework explains: the path of return to the vacuum baseline is individual.

Written texts can transmit the map. They cannot transmit the reference signal. A master whose field is coherent at or near the vacuum baseline provides the student's field with a direct coherence reference — a living example of what the student's own field can be. Without that reference, the student has no way to distinguish the vacuum baseline from the many locally stable false attractors that can be mistaken for it.

This is not mysticism. It is the physical consequence of the fact that every individual's vacuum baseline is unique — defined by the eigenvalue distribution of their Personal Blueprint. A written text describes a general path. A master who has traversed their own path can perceive the specific obstacles and openings in the student's coherence topology and adjust the teaching accordingly.

The living tradition is the empirical equivalent of individualised medicine applied to the path of consciousness development.

## **10. Conclusion**

The Neidan tradition is the longest-running empirical research programme in the history of consciousness science. Its findings — the three-stage transformation of Jing, Qi, and Shen through three dantian centres, the microcosmic orbit as vertical coherence coupling, the return to the Tao as vacuum baseline restoration — correspond with precision to the predictions of the nilpotent quaternion vacuum model derived from first principles of modern physics.

The source of both is the same: the algebraic self-organisation of the nilpotent vacuum. The Tao that the Neidan masters discovered through inner observation is the vacuum that Rowlands derived through quaternion algebra. They are the same structure. The human body is the meeting point where both can be known.

The schepper is not a person and not a god. It is the vacuum itself, unfolding by algebraic necessity from  $\emptyset = \sim\emptyset$  into the full coherence hierarchy — including the organisms that can perceive and describe the process.

The alchemical chain is:

$\emptyset = \sim\emptyset \rightarrow \text{Tao} \rightarrow \text{Jing} \rightarrow \text{Qi} \rightarrow \text{Shen} \rightarrow \text{Wu} \rightarrow \text{Tao}$

$\mathbf{N} \cdot \tilde{\mathbf{N}} = 0 \rightarrow \text{vacuum} \rightarrow D_7 \rightarrow D_8 \rightarrow D_9 \rightarrow D_{10} \rightarrow \emptyset$

The same movement. The same return. The same source.

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