

The Stages of Shintaido Development

Aoki-sensei has presented his view of the practitioner's body condition at five stages of Shintaido development. We will study these stages as they are reflected in each practitioner's body condition and movement.

1. *Nuke*

Nuke comes from *Nukeru*, which can be translated, as lost or dropped away as when the floor drops out from under one's feet. In Japanese, we might say *koshi ga nukeru* or *koshi nuke* and mean the person has lost his *koshi* and does not have any power. A martial artist looking at a beginning Shintaido practitioner's movement might think that the movement does not make any sense.

Nuke is the starting point. The goal of the first stage of Shintaido is to make our mind and body completely soft and flexible. In Japanese we say *gunya-gunya* to describe the movement of a snake or octopus or jelly fish. It is soft and flexible. These movements are especially important during the first stage of Shintaido.

2. *Nobi*

Nobi comes from *Nobiru* which means to stretch, to grow, to expand. Several expressions reflect this as in *Motto tsuke o obashite!* Stretch your *tsuki* much farther forward! And, *Tsuki ga nobite kita*. Your *tsuki* is really expansive and far reaching.

Iki-iki (more vigorous) or *Nobi-nobi* (expanding) are expressions that we use in Japanese that reflect the goal of the second stage of Shintaido which is to expand and invigorate your *kata* or form. The goal is to expand and stretch. "To let your movement or *kata* express your life force in it."

3. *Kiki*

Kiki comes from *Kiku*, to be effective. *Tsuki ga kiku!* This is literally "tsuki is effective." *Keri ga kiku* means that your kick is effective or is working. So in this stage, *kiki* means movements and forms are effective, that they work and make sense.

4. *Sae*

Sae comes from *Saeru*. *Atama ga saeru* means literally that your brain has cleared and awakened. For Shintaido, *sae* means that your *waza* or movement will become clear, beautiful and awakened. At this stage when others see your movements and *waza* they will recognize their clarity and beauty.

5. *Jizai*

Jiyu-jizai means free and liberated. I often use the expression *Katsu-Satsu-Jizai* to mean moving freely between life and death and choosing freely the sword of life and the sword of death. By the fifth stage of Shintaido, whatever you do, Shintaido will be expressed as part of it, as part of your life. Whatever you study in your daily life and whatever you do in your work, will also naturally be expressed through your Shintaido performance. Shintaido expression will be freely and naturally part of all that you do.