



Shozo Nakano – 10th dan

## Learn Fearlessly

Grip fighting is being more and more eliminated from judo contest. This is a good thing. The taking of a favorite grip is nothing new, and has likely been around since the first days of randori. However, the ripping away of the opponent's hands, the patty-cake and finger locking gripping, and the holding back or guarding the lapel have all caused judo contest to look absurd and provide for less true judo taking place.

Shozo Nakano is not well known to most judoka. His idea about his opponents' grips is more judo-like than the current grip-fighting position. Nakano was born in January 1888. He was promoted to 10th Degree Black Belt after his death on December 22, 1977. He became master instructor at Tokyo Ikashika University (Medical School). He energetically promoted Kodokan Judo to the world. His uchimata throw was very famous. He said "my strategy is to let my opponent get his favorite satisfactory grip and then I find my own way of chance to throw my opponent." \*

This is a very good idea for your randori practice. Ask for it from you partners. At first, you will defend against uncomfortable grips using strength and pushing resistance – like a white belt. You might even get thrown more than usual. Seek out the Nakano option. Learn both subtle defense and opportunities for your best throws. Or, you might discover the opportunity to add a new technique to your repertoire. Adopt the attitude, "Your favorite grip becomes my favorite situation." This is yielding. Now, you are doing judo.

The life lessons are clear, as well. It is not recommended you purposely put yourself in physical or psychological danger. In so far as interpersonal relationships are concerned, you will find plenty of opportunities to apply this theory. If you do it in judo practice, you will perhaps find it easier to do in life.

In judo, this is what randori is for. Those who practice useful randori are few. If you try Nakano's idea always, you will be among the few, and your judo will improve considerably. Nakano became 10th dan. Copy him.

Author's note: I have found that following this advice in both judo randori and in interpersonal relations has been one of the greatest and most demanding challenges of my life. In fifty some years of judo, and an even longer life, herein lies my greatest pursuit. It is a lesson learned over and over again, unless it is abandoned and dismissed. The latter is failure. I hope that you will grasp this and apply it sooner and more successfully.

\* More info on Nakano – <http://www.judo-ch.jp/english/legend/nakano/>