

# **1<sup>st</sup> Degree Black Belt Thesis Form**

**By Joshua J. Meredith**  
**Universal Kenpo Karate Dojos**

- Introduction
- Requirements
- Theme
- Techniques
- The Form
- Problems & Solutions

## **Introduction**

Within this paper, I will layout the requirements for this thesis form as well as the actual components of the form and problems I encountered while creating my thesis form.

## **Requirements**

The form was designed around the following set of instructions:

“You are to create eight techniques, one from each section of the Web of Knowledge. Then you are to put them into a form. You must cover the eight angles, and do the techniques on both sides. Just like in the earlier Personal Forms, I want you to have a theme. Don't start with the theme. Just start creating, and find your theme.”

The Web of Knowledge natures of attack:

- Grabs & Tackles
- Pushes
- Punches
- Kicks
- Hugs & Holds
- Locks & Chokes
- Weapons
- Multiple Attacks

## **The Theme**

As the primary requirement in this thesis form, I found myself using a variety of different joint manipulations; for the most part sticking with the arms, hands, and wrists.

You will see a variety of joint manipulations that are included in the art of Aikido- I even referenced those locks if I could. In addition, there are many breaks and arm bars from a variety of angles.

## Techniques

The eight techniques that were created for this form have been given generic in order to differentiate them in discussion and on paper. The techniques are listed in order of the Web of Knowledge, not the order found within the form. Beneath each technique is a brief discussion containing the ideas that are found within the movements.

### Technique #1

Rotating Twig (Front- Right Cross Grab)

1. Step your left foot forward to 12 o'clock as you drop your right fist on to your attacker's forearm and ricochet up to your attacker's face. Simultaneously roll your right hand around your attacker's right wrist to expose the elbow and cancel out their width.
2. Execute a left hammerfist strike to your attacker's ribs as you simultaneously sweep your attacker's right leg with your left leg.
3. Without planting, land back to 12 o'clock with your left foot as you execute a left chop to your attacker's face.
4. Pull your attacker's right arm into an armbar as you rotate their head counterclockwise. As you do this, step your right foot to 9 o'clock.
5. Step back with your left foot to 6 o'clock as you pull to separate your attacker's shoulder.

### Discussion:

When I was creating this technique, I wanted to roll my attacker's arm over and damage the elbow, so I borrowed the opening of Darting Mace. This strike is followed by a sweep and a ripping motion through my attacker's ribs, *a la* Entwined Lance. After I return with a knife edge kick and a front hand chop, I then twist my attacker in a position quite familiar from Dominating Circles, rotate them and pull them to the ground.

The idea was to use a control technique like Dominating Circles at the end- the only issue I really encountered was that I was originally not rotating them with a initial chop (with the knife-edge), and this caused me to have to work more to move them in to this position.

## **Technique #2**

### **Low Twins- (Front Two Hand Low Push)**

1. Step your left foot back to 6 o'clock as you execute two outward downward hooking parries to the inside of your attacker's wrists. At the same time, pull your right foot back into a cat stance.
2. Execute a right front kick to your attacker's groin.
3. Land forward as you grab your attacker's hands and wrench them back towards your attacker's face.
4. Execute a left knee kick to your attacker's face.
5. Land forward into a left neutral bow as you execute a left inward elbow strike to your attacker's face.

### **Discussion:**

I originally got this idea from a variation that Mr. Larry Tatum showed me at a seminar in Kansas City. He was showing additional moves that can be found within Short Form 3 if you only add slight movement. The technique he built off of was Destructive Twins. If the punch missed and your attacker came back in with a low tackle attempt, you could drop back and hit a cat stance with the outward downward hooking parries. He concluded with three levels of finger breaks as you transition in to Crashing Wings. He utilizes the fingers. The hands became an easier object to grab and hold on to as I kick my attacker in the groin.

With this technique, I added a kick to stop my attacker's forward momentum as well as allow me the opportunity to grab his hands. After the kick I drop forward and wrench on the hands, compressing the wrists back towards the attacker and down. Normally, they drop further to the ground. The lines them up with a rear leg knee strike, landing forward with an elbow sandwich. I then step forward again and thrust my leg in to them to cause them to fall over. This plays the part of my transition as well.

### **Technique #3**

#### **Charging Mace (Front- Right Step-Through Punch)**

1. Execute a right upward block under your attacker's right arm as you step your right foot to 10:30 in to a twist stance.
2. Step your left foot to 12 o'clock as you grab your attacker's wrist with your right hand and execute a left forearm strike to break your attacker's right elbow.
3. Execute a left backfist.
4. Have the backfist continue on its orbit and execute a left raking hammerfist to your attacker's right kidney as you simultaneously sweep out your attacker's right leg with your left leg.
5. Land into a twist stance as you strike down on to your attacker's right elbow again.
6. Execute a left knife-edge kick to your attacker's right knee as you simultaneously with a left backfist to your attacker's face.
7. Execute an outward wrist take down as you plant your left foot back to 7:30.
8. Execute a right downward round kick to your attacker's sternum.

#### **Discussion:**

In creating this technique, I looked to Reversing Circles for some of inspiration. To start with, I open with an upward block as I pivot into a twist. I then step out to execute a left inward strike to break their arm. Simply refer to Flashing Wings in the Long Form 4 series for this option. Once I am there though, I have to break them down. I rip through their face with a left back knuckle and sweep out simultaneous with a left hammerfist, taking them down in to an armbar position.

This is where Reversing Circles comes in to play. I break the arm again. Then I use a knife edge kick with a left back knuckle.

After stepping out and pivoting, I throw my attacker to the ground using an outward wrist lock. I follow their descending body with a right downward round kick to their ribs or face depending on how exactly they fall.

#### **Technique #4**

##### **Flashing Four (Front- Right Front Kick / Right Punch)**

1. Step your right foot back in to a cross over as you execute a right downward block to the outside of your attacker's right leg.
2. Pivot into a left neutral bow as you execute a left inward block simultaneous with a right outward strike to the inside of your attacker's arm.
3. Step your right foot to 11:30 into a right neutral bow as you execute a right chop down on to your attacker's arm.
4. Fold arm in to a Figure 4 armlock as pivot to face 7:30 as you take your attacker to the ground.

#### **Discussion:**

Since my theme began to take form as varieties of arm locks, a punch follows this kick because I had to get a hold of that arm somehow. I open with a blocking sequence seen in other kick/punch combo techniques, specifically Unwinding Pendulum here. The only difference is that I use the break option of Flashing Mace to get my rear hand hand.

Next, I step forward, smash a hand sword in to their arm, wrap it up into a figure four arm lock, pivot and take them to the ground.

### **Technique #5**

#### The Hammer (Rear Armbar)

1. Step your left foot back to 6 o'clock between your attacker's legs as you execute a left outward elbow to your attacker's face.
2. Follow with a left outward claw to his face.
3. Pivot into a right forward bow as you execute a left uppercut under your attacker's right elbow to break the arm.
4. Pivot into a left neutral bow facing 6 o'clock as you execute a right knee strike to your attacker's *solar plexus*.
5. Execute a right leg sweep to the back of your attacker's right leg to take them to the ground.

#### **Discussion:**

The Hammer was created against an armbar and begins much like Locked Wing. It changes after the break. When I pivot, drive a knee up and right hammerfist down, then sweep out their leg and take them to the ground.

### **Technique #6**

#### Twins of Death (Front; Two Hand Choke)

1. Step your right foot forward as you execute a "U" punch with your right hand striking your attacker's face and your left hand striking your attacker's groin.
2. Grab your attacker's right hand with your right hand and step your right foot back to 6 o'clock as you put them into an (Nikyō) armbar.
3. Execute a right front kick to your attacker's *solar plexus*.
4. Land forward into a right neutral bow as you execute a right lifting back knuckle strike.

#### **Discussion:**

With this technique, I originally added the double punches because it was felt that the attacker wouldn't cooperate without some initial pain. I got the inspiration from an old "FKKE Kenpo Karate" technique named Drawing Leaves. I used a *nikyō* lock to cancel their height zones and then concluded with a kick and rising back knuckle.

## **Technique #7**

### **Rounding Storm (Front- Right Round Club)**

1. Step your right foot forward into a right neutral bow facing 12 o'clock as you execute a right inward block to your attacker's right bicep while your left hand blocks at your attacker's right wrist.
2. Rake your right fingers outward across your attacker's eyes.
3. Execute a right inward hammerfist rake your attacker's right floating ribs as you follow through and execute a right uppercut under your attacker's right arm to break the arm. (Grab the club if the chance opens itself.)
4. Execute a right outward hammerfist strike to your attacker's right ribs.
5. Hook around the left side of your attacker's head.
6. Rotate your attacker's right arm clockwise as you push down on their head to get the steering wheel effect.
7. As your attacker falls to the ground, execute a right inward hammerfist to his face.

### **Discussion:**

When I created Rounding Storm, there were a few obstacles but not too many. I wanted to use the stick against my attacker and Mr. Collingwood wanted someone to hit the attacker with the club after they were down. Him being the attacker, I honored such a request. As for the components of this technique, I needed to hurt the attacker right away, so I go for the eyes after stopping the club. I then rake through the ribs and pop up on the arm, *a la* Entwined Lance. Even if they drop the club, I can still finish the technique. If I have the club, I can jab it in to their ribs and hook to the back of my attacker's head to assist in pulling them towards the ground.

I also wanted to utilize the steering wheel takedown as I had used it occasionally and been privy to feeling its effects on many occasions. Since Mr. Collingwood gave me the idea of hitting the attacker on the ground with the club, I do so. I can use the club or the hammerfist.

## **Technique #8**

### Twisting Predators (Front Flank- Punches)

1. As the first attacker at 1:30 comes at you with a right step-through punch, step your right foot back to 7:30 as you execute a right inward block to your attacker's arm.
2. Execute a right front snap kick to your attacker's groin.
3. Execute a right outward handsword to your attacker's neck.
4. Put your left hand on top of your attacker's right wrist as your left hand goes beneath.
5. Pass the wrist to 1:30 as you step your left foot to 1:30. Pivot into a right neutral bow facing 7:30 as you continue the counter-clockwise circle and grab your attacker's hand. Pull over their shoulder and use their arm to take them down. (Shiho Nage).
6. Execute a right knife-edge kick to the underside of your attacker's chin. Sweep out your attacker's leg and step your left so you are in a right neutral bow facing 9 o'clock.
7. The second attacker comes in with a right uppercut. Execute a downward block on top of your attacker's right arm.
8. Grab the wrist as you step your right foot back to 3 o'clock and wrench them over (using an Ikkyo).
9. Execute a right front kick to your attacker's *solar plexus* followed by a right lifting back knuckle strike as you land forward.
10. Leap off to 7:30 as you execute a right middle knuckle strike to your attacker's ribs.
11. Execute a right knife edge kick to the back of your attacker's right knee.
12. Land with a right backfist through your attacker's kidney.
13. Execute a right inward elbow sandwich to your attacker's head.

## **Discussion:**

A multiple attacker technique was next on the list and I did have some help with this and did stay within my theme of the locks and arm bars. We also used a multiple attacker scenario not really discussed- both attackers in front. I open this technique with Delayed Sword, one of the more simple techniques (and yet here it is in a black belt thesis form). I use their body as a shield as I take their arm with me and use a shiho-nage to drop them to the ground.

I execute a knife edge kick and ready myself for the second attacker to make his way around with an uppercut. I drop a block on top and roll them over stepping back (much like an old "FKKE Kenpo Karate" technique, Drawing Snake. I then take advantage of their position with a front kick followed by a rising back knuckle. When they raise up from the back knuckle, I leap into another well known American Kenpo technique, Leaping Crane.

## **The Form**

This will remain a simple write up of the form in order to give a better idea of what is happening.

1. Low Twins (two hand push from 12 o'clock)
2. Low Twins (two hand push from 6 o'clock)
3. Charging Mace (right step-through punch from 10:30)
4. Charging Mace (left step-through punch from 1:30)
5. Rotating Twig (right hand cross-grab from 9 o'clock)
6. Rotating Twig (left hand cross-grab from 3 o'clock)
7. The Hammer (right hammerlock from 10:30)
8. The Hammer (left hammerlock from 4:30)
9. Rounding Storm (right round club from 3 o'clock)
10. Rounding Storm (left round club from 9 o'clock)
11. Flashing Four (right kick/punch from 1:30)
12. Flashing Four (left kick/punch from 7:30)
13. Twins of Death (two hand choke from 10:30)
14. Twins of Death (two hand choke from 7:30)
15. Twisting Predators (right punch from 10:30; right uppercut from 7:30)
16. Twisting Predators (left punch from 1:30; left uppercut from 4:30)

## Problems & Solutions

I did encounter numerous problems, both large and small when I created this form. The requirements behind this one were much different than the personal form I made at purple belt those many years ago.

- **Problem:** The Hammer- Since you are normally in a stance of some sort, I noticed that when I started, no matter how I stepped, I would end up with the one leg I needed to step back with already back in position.
- **Solution:** really not a solution, but I adjusted my angles. If I was in a stance on the 10:30 / 4:30 line and I wanted to get some back-up mass on my elbow shot, I had to make the attack come from 9 o'clock and 3 o'clock.
  
- **Problem:** Twisting Predators- I practiced for nearly two weeks forgetting that both of my attackers were in front of me. Now, I knew they were there, but I was working with an attacker who was at 7:30 on paper, but was at 6 o'clock as I practiced.
- **Solution:** went back to the original location of my attackers. Added the transition to get to my next attacker in the second Twisting Predators.
  
- **Problem:** Memory. I think a lot of it could be due to the newness of it and the similarity of a lot of these techniques. Also a lot of the positions are the same, so I could simply forget to do The Hammer and I would be in position to go right in to Rounding Storm without a hitch.
- **Solution:** I worked on it many many many times. Recited the techniques in order to get them in my head. Worked on footwork while at work. Worked in the grass, the living room, the parking lot- you name it. As I type this, I still don't feel happy about its presentation; it still feels rough, but I will continue to work it until it feels smooth and easy to get through.
  
- **Problem:** Balance. There are quite a few rotations and kicks throughout the beginning acts of this form.
- **Solution:** The first issue I ran into was the transition between the first two techniques as you need to turn and shift your weight in to that cat stance. Other areas of balance problems came with the many rotations and 180 degree turns. It has taken a lot of practice to do most of this without falling over, hurt my ankles, etc. Hopefully it shows.