

Ip Man Knew



By Ciarán Handley

17th November 2018

Ip Man Knew

Part I

Magician



The Grandmaster cookie scene

If we look deeply into this clip we will see an understanding not only of the Tao, but also of Magician.

“Break from what you know. And you will know more. If the Southern arts go far, what boundary is the North?”

These words are spoken in the clip.

To understand *Magician*, I would have to lay some more foundations. So we will come back to that one later.

We will go through this Grandmaster cookie scene in some detail now. But the Magician aspect of this, we will come back to later. Once I have laid a foundation in Magician.

Ip Man Knew

Part II

Win first in the mind

The Grandmaster cookie scene

“The victorious warrior wins first and then goes to war. While the defeated warrior goes to war and then seeks to win.”

This is a line from Sun Tzu’s Art of War. In this clip we see this same principle.

From 1:38 minutes to 2:45 we see Ip Man look to break the cake, yet not attempt to do so. Why is this?

It is because he *knew*. He knew that if he tried to break the cake, he would fail. *“The victorious warrior wins first, and then goes to war.”* Ip Man knew that he did not have victory in his mind. He knew this. Which is why if he had attempted to break the cake, he would have failed.

“The defeated warrior goes to war and then seeks to win.” Ip Man knew that if he attempted to break the bread without having won first in his mind, then he would be defeated. This is why he did not try to break the cake. Not at first.

This is an indication of level. It would take a high level to recognise this, and to *not* engage. That Ip Man did not engage is an indication of high level of mastery.

Ip Man Knew

Part III

Win first in the mind

– Part II

If there is not victory in the mind, do not engage. Seek the Tao. Gain victory in the mind. Only then engage.

Let us return to this clip.

[The Grandmaster cookie scene](#)

At 2:45, we see Ip Man now begin to engage. He prepares himself, and then at 2:55, before trying to break the bread, he drops deeper into the Tao. He goes within. To seek the Tao. This is very important.

He knew that he did not have the level to break the bread. Not at first. But then he dropped deeper into the Tao. Deeper within. Until he found the knowing that he should now engage. Only when he found this knowing did he engage. Only then.

Ip Man Knew

Part IV

Win first in the mind

– Part III

To know when to engage requires mastery.

*To know when to withdraw requires higher mastery
again.*

Ip Man Knew

Part V

How Ip Man broke the cake

How exactly did Ip Man break the cake?

Let us review:

[The Grandmaster cookie scene](#)

The answer lies at 3:30 minutes into the clip. It is when Ip Man banged shoulders with the Grandmaster.

The point is where both of their shoulders collided. The shock from that collision went down the Grandmaster's arm. It had to go somewhere. The shock travelled down his arm and when it had nowhere left to go having run out of arm it went into the cake. It went into the cake, which is what broke the cake.

Ip Man knew this and did it deliberately. He did not break the cake directly. Instead he broke it *indirectly*.

He deliberately banged into the Grandmaster and channelled the shock down his arm. Banged him in such a way that he knew the shock would travel down his arm to the cake. This is how he broke the cake.

Ip Man Knew

Part VI

How Ip Man broke the cake - Part II

This next part is tricky. It does require a deep understanding of how to work with chi.

But I'll give it, and we'll see if we can follow along, shall we?

Now, what is very important to understand is that when Ip Man banged the Grandmaster's shoulder he was *physically holding the cake*. He had his hand on it. This enabled him to control where the energy was directed to. Ip Man being in contact with the cake provided an energy conduit for the chi from the collision to travel down the Grandmaster's arm and into the cake.

To be able to channel energy in this way requires a high level of mastery. The collision itself is not sufficient, for while energy is put into the shoulder by the collision, without the ability to *direct* this energy down the arm it would simply dissipate throughout the body. To be able to direct the energy very specifically down the arm requires a highly developed mastery of chi.

The next step was for Ip Man to block the chi energy at the level of the cake, which he did with his hand. This again requires a certain level of mastery of chi for the energy needed to be blocked at exactly the level of the cake.

The final adjustment was for Ip Man to change his hand position so that he switched to holding the cake only with his fingers. This was where he wanted to focus the chi energy from the collision, now that he had directed it down the shoulder from the arm.

The level of control of chi that would be required to do this would be very high.

Ip Man Knew

Part VII

Why Ip Man did not break the cake

*Ip Man broke the cake indirectly. But he **could** have broken it **directly**. Yet he chose not to do so. Why?*

Let us look at the relevant scene. It happens at 3:28 minutes in.

Let us review:

[The Grandmaster cookie scene](#)

At 3:28 minutes in we see that Ip Man had his hand on the cake. He could have broken it easily. Yet he did not. He chose **not** to break it directly. Instead he chose to break it **indirectly**, by colliding with the Grandmaster's shoulder, to channel the shock down his arm into the cake.

He did this to demonstrate his mastery.

Ip Man Knew

Part VIII

Acknowledgement of defeat

*The Grandmaster acknowledged defeat **before** the cake broke*

At that stage when he acknowledged defeat, he *did not know* that the cake was going to break. So why did he acknowledge defeat?

Because he knew that Ip Man could have broken the cake directly, but that he choose not to.

To understand this, think of *counting coup* among the Sioux. This one I *won't* explain – if you don't know what *counting coup* is then look it up! And if you don't understand the reference that Ip Man not breaking the cake directly was akin to the Sioux counting coup, then have a think about it. Figure it out!

The Grandmaster recognised Ip Man not breaking the cake directly as *counting coup*.

In knowing that Ip Man could have broken the cake directly but chose not to, the Grandmaster knew that he had been defeated.

Which he acknowledged *before* the cake broke. At that stage, when acknowledging defeat, he *did not know* that the cake was going to break.

Ip Man Knew

Part IX

Victory with

This one is to do with respect

The Grandmaster lost, but he gained respect. As did Ip Man. In this there was victory *with*. Each man won.

The Grandmaster may have lost the contest, but he gained the respect of the crowd, and he left with his head held high.

This is to do with honour and respect.

He gained both. Even in defeat he gained honour and respect from the crowd.

This is victory *with*.

This concept of victory *with* is what I teach.

Ip Man Knew

Part X

How Ip Man broke the cake - Part III

Let us take it back to how Ip Man broke the cake, shall we?

Let us review:

[The Grandmaster cookie scene](#)

From 3:28 minutes into the clip, when Ip Man banged shoulders with the Grandmaster, to 3:33 minutes.

Let us look at those five seconds.

Where did the control come from, to channel the chi so precisely?

This next part is tricky. It does require a deep understanding of how to work with chi.

But I'll give it, and we'll see if we can follow along, shall we?

I said in "Ip Man Knew, Part IV"

*"Now, what is very important to understand is that when Ip Man banged the Grandmaster's shoulder, he was **physically holding the cake**. He had his hand on it. This enabled him to control where the energy was directed to. Ip Man being in contact with the cake provided an energy conduit for the chi from the collision to travel down the Grandmaster's arm and into the cake.*

*To be able to channel energy in this way requires a high level of mastery. The collision itself is not sufficient, for while energy is put into the shoulder by the collision, without the ability to **direct** this energy down the arm it would simply dissipate throughout the body. To be able to direct the energy very specifically down the arm requires a highly developed mastery of chi.*

The next step was for Ip Man to block the chi energy at the level of the cake, which he did with his hand. This again requires a certain level of mastery of chi, for the energy needed to be blocked at exactly the level of the cake.

The final adjustment was for Ip Man to change his hand position, so that he switched to holding the cake only with his fingers. This was where he wanted to focus the chi energy from the collision, now that he had directed it down the shoulder from the arm.

The level of control of chi that would be required to do this would be very high.”

Now, let us take it from there

Because you see mastery of chi would not be sufficient to do this. One would also require a mastery of *Shen*. (The Three Treasures of Chinese medicine are *Chi*, *Jing* and *Shen*. I'll be writing about them later. The one we're focussed on here is *Shen*. Which is the *will*. The *mind*.)

That is what I want to talk about now.

Let us talk steering wheels

The engine of the car provides the power. That makes it go. But the **direction** in which it goes in, that's the steering wheel.

*The **control** to channel the chi comes from the **shen***

This is the only way one could break the cake in the way shown with Ip Man and the Grandmaster.

Chi is not enough.

It would require **shen**.



*Chi is the energy. But the **control** of that energy comes from the mind.*

Which is shen.

Yet shen is more. It is shen that *creates* the chi. So shen provides not only the control, but it also *creates* the chi.

This bit is one for another document.

Perhaps later.

Ip Man Knew



End