

## Introduction

I am an academic with a tool set different to yours as a clinician. It is the tool-set that is needed to fully address the question, and understand the answer, of what is chiropractic? Why is it so incredibly socially accepted?

So what does a *Philosopher of Chiropractic* actually do? They examine chiropractic deeply, which is an absolute joy. The more I learn the more I celebrate clinicians and the magic you perform every day, using your own carefully curated set of tools.

So, what is my tool set?

### [INTRO CLIP]

Let's start at the beginning with 3 key points:

- ▶ A philosopher of chiropractic must be intimately familiar with the accepted canon of philosophical works far beyond the sparse writings of chiropractors;
- ▶ Second, a philosopher of chiropractic will have determined their own philosophical lens, the filter through which arguments will be made and accepted or rejected. Here I make the point that all we can do is accept or reject an argument and offer our explanation. An explanation is not a justification;
- ▶ and the third is to have a body of work that has been written, argued through critical peer-review, and published.

You can't really be a useful philosopher by doing what Diogenes did. He was a homeless Greek who camped out on the street in a large ceramic pot some 2600 years ago. His main claim to fame was his habit of giving passers-by the finger, and it is Diogenes who is said to have first used this abusive hand signal. Who said philosophy was boring!

The philosophy of Diogenes has been considered to be anarchy, or absurdism, or cynicism. It does not really matter but it is amusing to me to listen to those who want to be philosophers just go back to Plato and Socrates and omit the more colourful, and perhaps more meaningful, thinkers of Ancient Greece,<sup>1</sup> the Pre-socratics. They usually completely omit the Asian schools of philosophy, especially Musashi.

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1. Philip Chrysopoulos, reporter. Diogenes: Likely First Person to Give Someone the Finger. Greek Reporter. 22 November 2021. URL <https://greekreporter.com/2021/11/22/diogenes-the-ancient-greek-philosopher-who-was-the-first-to-give-the-finger/>

And this is the problem I see in many who claim they are philosophers, let alone *philosophers of chiropractic*; they are happy to drop a few household names which really is racism and sexism in that they all refer to mediterranean, old white men.

Sooner or latter these pretend philosophers will tell you about Socrates. To save them the trouble I'll tell you he drank a cup of hemlock to kill himself and said it was because he agreed with the decisions of the people that he was a trouble maker. But the things we need to know are really, why did he do this? What was his attitude? Above all, what were his arguments?

Alain de Botton<sup>2</sup> described Socrates as an ugly little man who argued relentlessly with everyone he met on the streets of Athens to the extent he pissed them off. A good question to expose the shallowness of some who claim to be a philosopher is, '*how do you see the death of Socrates relating to that of Seneca*'?

In a nutshell, Seneca also died by drinking hemlock a few years before Socrates, but Seneca's death was more due to political intrigue than his philosophy, which leads us to even earlier days in China, where philosophical argument emerged a little earlier, about 2,800 years ago and firstly as a '*philosophy of law*' to give substance to the decisions of the ruling class which was emerging from the general masses.

While Socrates was interested in moral philosophy, the numerous pre-Socratic Greek philosophers were more interested in natural philosophy. Figures like Thales of Miletus, also around 2,800 years ago and considered the Father of Western philosophy.<sup>3</sup> He is considered to the first to use reason, to use proof, and to generalise. He coined the word cosmos, the first Western word to describe the universe.

And then Pythagoras, who taught an ascetic way of life that demanded dietary restrictions and promoted a spirituality that idolised numbers and math, called numerology, and the Sophists who held there was no objective truth and were agnostics.<sup>4</sup>

Meanwhile in Japan, Asakawa points out that the Chinese schools of political philosophy also date back to 600 BC<sup>5</sup> p. 166 or 2,800 years ago. This is relevant because these schools

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2. de Botton A. The consolations of philosophy. London. Penguin Books. 2001.

3. Chaliakopoulos A. Thales Of Miletus: The Father Of Western Philosophy (Facts & Bio). The Collector. URL <https://www.thecollector.com/thales-miletus/>

4. Chaliakopoulos A. 13 Most Important Greek Philosophers Before Socrates (Presocratics). The Collector. URL <https://www.thecollector.com/greek-philosophers-before-socrates-presocratics/>

5. Asakawa K. The early institutional life of Japan. New York. Paragon Book Company. 1903, reprinted 1963.

gave rise to those in Japan on which I base my personal philosophy of pragmatism.

Confucius was prominent in this period (551–479), similar to Diogenes.

As with Plato, who wrote *The Republic*, a discussion about the organisation of various types of states<sup>6</sup> and hence the distribution of political power, the main work of Confucius was the doctrine of power. The many sayings he offered on other matters are what have carried his legacy forward.

I hope I have shown you how careful one must be when starting to seriously think one might be a philosopher. The Japanese of course got caught up in Buddhism, which Asakawa<sup>5</sup> considered to be a pestilence of religion similar to that of Catholicism.

I mentioned Musashi and it is impossible to understand contemporary Japanese thinking without reading and heeding Musashi. He was a remarkable killing machine, using a two sword or even a two stick weaponry.

I don't understand his point in killing 60 or so people in one-on-one duels, but before he died he wrote *The Book of Five Rings*,<sup>7</sup> his most known work which is abused in the corporate setting to inspire and lead the worker drones to create greater profits for their masters. He wrote a *Combat Strategy in 35 articles*<sup>7</sup> but for me his most meaningful work is his *Dokkodo*, the *Way of Walking Alone*.<sup>8</sup>

The learnings from Musashi are to hold a complete focus on what you are doing to the point of obsession, within which daily matters become somewhat trivial. He wrote of five elements, adding 'Void' to the known 'Fire', 'Water', 'Earth', and 'Air'. Perhaps it was the 'void' in which he felt at ease to be proficient. From this I take the idea to work hard to become the best at what it is you do and don't sweat the small stuff.

Today you may think of '*being in the void*' as '*being in the flow*', or '*in the zone*'.

Is this a philosophy of chiropractic? I don't know, perhaps it could be and perhaps it should be, but above all, perhaps it is here that *Chiropractic Philosophy* which drives what you do, meets the *Philosophy of Chiropractic* which helps us understand why you do it.

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6. Arnold M. Plato's Philosophy: 10 Breakthroughs That Contributed to Society. The Collector. URL <https://www.thecollector.com/plato-philosophy-breakthroughs/>

7. Alexander Bennett. The Complete Musashi. Tokyo. Tuttle Publishing. 2021. Order here: <https://www.booktopia.com.au/complete-musashi-the-book-of-five-rings-and-other-works-musashi/book/9784805316160.html>

8. Lawrence A Kand and Kris Wilder, Eds. Musashi's Dokkodo. Burien WA. Stickman publications. 2015. Order here <https://www.booktopia.com.au/musashi-s-dokkodo-the-way-of-walking-alone--miyamoto-musashi/book/9780692563496.html>

This video is indexed at ebrall.com as '01-3 Who's REALLY who'

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