

## A Timeline of Xiong Shili's Life and an Overview of His Published Books<sup>1</sup>

1885 Xiong born in Huanggang County, Hubei Province.

1892 Xiong, from an impoverished family, herds cattle on a Huanggang Hillside to earn money for his family.

1894 Xiong's father, Xiong Qixiang (熊其相), his teacher and mentor, passes away.

1902 Refusing on principle to sit the imperial examinations, Xiong and boyhood friends, He Zixin (何自新 1882-1904), and Wang Han (王漢 1882-1904), travel to Wuchang to join the anti-Manchu Republican Revolution.

1904 Xiong joins the imperial army as an enlisted soldier covertly to liaise between the soldiers and the Revolutionaries.

1905 Xiong passes the entrance examination for the Hubei Army Special School (湖北新軍特別學堂) and trains to become an officer in the Imperial Army. Xiong's true purpose, however, is covertly to liaise between the Revolutionaries and the student officers' corps.

1906 Xiong, Zhang Nanxian (張難先 1873-1968), and other Revolutionaries establish the Society for the Daily Increase in Knowledge (日知會), a clandestine revolutionary organization. The Manchu court orders the Southern Army to maneuver in Hunan Province. Xiong submits a plan to the Revolutionaries for a revolt in Hunan but exposed to the Qing authorities, Xiong must flee Wuchang for his life.

1911 Wuchang becomes the first city to rise in support of the Republican Revolution (辛亥革命) and Xiong is actively involved in the Wuchang Uprising. After the Revolution succeeds, the Hubei Military Governor's Office (湖北督軍府) appoints Xiong a Staff Officer (參謀).

1912 Yuan Shikai (袁世凱 1859-1916) becomes Provisional President of the Republic. Yuan hopes to establish himself as a new emperor so proceeds to attack the Revolutionaries. Xiong accepts severance pay from the Revolutionary government and buys land in De'an (德安) County, Jiangxi (江西) province for him and his brothers to farm.

1915 Two of Xiong's younger brothers pass away, succumbing to the rigors of farming in De'an.

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<sup>1</sup> This timeline and publication overview is derived from three main sources: Xiong Shili, *The Collected Works of Xiong Shili* (十力叢書), in particular Volume X, *First Continuation of the Essential Sayings of Xiong Shili* (十力語要初續) and Volume XV, *The Essential Sayings of Xiong Shili* (十力語要), Shanghai Chinese Classics Publishing House, Shanghai, Chinese Edition, Kindle Edition; Wang Ruhua, *Three Sages of Modern Confucianism* (現代儒家三聖), Xin Rui Wen Chuang (新銳文創) Publishing House, Taipei, 2012; and Edward F. Connelly, Unpublished PhD Thesis, *Xiong Shili and His Critique of Yogacara*, Australian National University, Canberra A.C.T., Australia, 1978.

1916 Xiong joins Sun Yat-sen's (Sun Yixian 孫逸仙 1866-1925) Guangxi Army to participate in Sun's military expedition against Hunan to topple Yuan Shikai who dies later that year.

1918-20 Xiong quits the army and politics and accepts teaching posts at middle schools in Jiangsu province and Tianjin city.

1918 Xiong self publishes his first book *Reflections* (心書)<sup>2</sup>.

1919 Xiong teaches at the Nankai Middle School (南開中學) in Tianjin.

1920 While traveling between Jiangsu and Tianjin, Xiong stops in Nanjing and, after hearing Ouyang Jingwu (歐陽竟無 1871-1943) lecture on Buddhism at the Nanjing Institute for Inner Learning (南京支那內學院), Xiong quits his Tianjin teaching post and enrolls at the Institute to study Buddhism.

1921 Xiong self publishes his *Reading a Copy of the Treatise on Great Wisdom* (讀智度論抄).<sup>3</sup>

1922 Peking University Chancellor Cai Yuanpei (蔡元培 1868-1940) sends Liang Shuming (梁漱溟 1899-1988) to Nanjing to select a candidate to teach Yogacara Buddhism and logic at the university. Liang chooses Xiong who arrives at the university later that year.

1923 Peking University publishes as lecture notes Xiong's first version of an *Introduction to the Uniqueness of Consciousness*<sup>4</sup> (唯識講義).

1923 The debate on Science and Metaphysics (科學與玄學論戰)<sup>5</sup> commences with Xiong joining on the side of the metaphysicians defending traditional thought and culture.

1924 Xiong hospitalized in Peking for neurasthenia. According to his daughter, Xiong Youguang (熊幼光), at this time, Xiong started using the style name *shili* (十力) and stopped using his given name *zizhen* (子真). Xiong took the name "shili" from a line in Shen Yue's (沈約 441-513) preface to the *Buddhist Scriptures* (內典): 興度之業既深，十力之功自遠. The prevalence of the [Buddhist] cause is deep, and the merit of the ten powers [of a Buddha] is far reaching. (Soothill, p. 46)

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<sup>2</sup> Prof. Wing-tsit Chan translates this title as *Confession*. Cf. Wing-tsit Chan, *Religious Trends in Modern China*, Columbia University Press, New York, 1953, p. 127. The book is also known as *Xiong Zizhen's Reflections* (熊子真心書) as Zizhen was Xiong's name before he adopted the name Shili (十力).

<sup>3</sup> According to Mou Zongsan (牟宗三 1909-1995), Xiong probably wrote this work while at the Nanjing Institute for Inner Learning where copying a famous book was both a means of obtaining a personal copy and familiarizing oneself with the text.

<sup>4</sup> The term *weishi* (唯識) is conventionally translated "consciousness-only." Xiong, however, makes it clear in his writings that the word *wei* in this Tang dynasty term means "unique" (唯特) and not "only" (唯一).

<sup>5</sup> The term *xuanxue* (玄學) for metaphysics is the preferred term for Xiong and other traditional thinkers. Science aligned thinkers use the literal translation *xing er shang xue* (形而上學) "the learning above physics."

1925/26 Peking University publishes as lecture notes Xiong's *Emendation and Sub-commentary to the Great Commentary on the Treatise on Logic* (因明大疏刪註). *The Great Commentary on the Treatise on Logic* is a Tang dynasty work written by the Monk Kui Ji (窺基 632-682).

1925 *The Inner Learning Annual* (內學年刊) Second Collection (二輯) publishes Xiong's *Essay on Phenomena* (境相章). This essay is the first part of Xiong's *Lecture Notes on the Uniqueness of Consciousness* (唯識講義).

1926 Peking University publishes Xiong's second version of *Lecture Notes on the Uniqueness of Consciousness* (唯識講義).

1927 Xiong begins teaching at Ma Yifu's (馬一浮 1883-1967) Fuxing Academy (復興書院) in Hangzhou.

1930 Xiong falls ill and convalesces in Hangzhou. Xiong privately prints copies of *A Record of Lectures Respectfully Attended* (尊聞錄). In 1935, this work is later re-published as *juan* (卷) [fascicle] 4 of *The Essential Sayings of Xiong Shili* (十力語要).

1932 The Zhejiang Provincial Library publishes the classical language (文言文) edition of Xiong's *magnum opus A New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness* (新唯識論).

1935 Xiong returns to Peking University. Peking's Binxing Publishing House (北平斌興印書局) publishes Xiong's *A Refutation of the Refutation of the New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness* (破破新唯識論). The Peking Publishing House (北京出版社) publishes Xiong's *A Summary of Xiong Shili's Essential Sayings on Learning* (十力論學語輯要). This work later becomes the first *juan* [fascicle] of *The Essential Sayings of Xiong Shili* (十力語要). Cf. 1947 below.

1937 Peking University publishes Xiong's *A Comprehensive Explanation of Buddhist Terminology* (佛家名相通釋), a work Xiong wrote at the urging of Beijing University Philosophy Department Chairman Tang Yongtong (湯用彤 1893-1964). Xiong flees the invading Japanese to Sichuan.

1938 The Chongqing Central Army Officer's School publishes Xiong's *Lectures on Chinese History* (中國歷史講話).

1938-39 Xiong writes his *Outline of Chinese History* (中國歷史綱要) but it is not published. Xiong also writes his *Correcting Han [Feizi]* (正韓 [非子]) from notes taken by students who attended Xiong's lectures on Han Feizi. The work is later published under the title *A Critique of Han Feizi* (韓非子評論). Cf. 1949 below.

1939 Xiong teaches for a second time at the Fuxing Academy but soon falls ill and travels to Suzhou to recover.

1940-41-44 With funding from the Chinese Philosophical Association, the Commercial Press in Shanghai publishes in three parts the colloquial language (語體文) version of Xiong's *magnum opus* *A New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness* (新唯識論).

1944 Xiong establishes the Research Institute of Chinese Philosophy at Beipei, a satellite city just outside Chongqing in Sichuan province.

1945 Xiong teaches philosophy at the Philosophy Research Department Attached to the Yellow Sea Chemical Industry Research Institute in Sichuan. The Chongqing Southern Printing House publishes Xiong's *The Essentials of Reading the Classics* (讀經示要).

1946 Xiong teaches for a third time at the Fuxing Academy in Hangzhou. The Wutong Bridge Printing House in Leshan, Sichuan, publishes Xiong's *Chinese Philosophy and Western Science* (中國哲學與西洋科學), a treatise that Xiong wrote while teaching at the Philosophy Research Department Attached to the Yellow Sea Chemical Industry Research Institute in Sichuan. Cf. 1945 above.

1947 Xiong returns to Peking University which has returned to Peking from its wartime location in Sichuan. The Hubei Printing House publishes the complete four *juan* [fascicles] of Xiong's *The Essential Sayings of Xiong Shili* (十力語要) as the first volume in *The Collected Works of Xiong Shili* (十力叢書).

1947-48 A northern China Buddhist monthly magazine titled *Worldly Solutions* (世間解) publishes Xiong's *Reading a Copy of the Treatise on Great Wisdom* (讀智度論抄) in the periodicals' numbers 3 through 7. Cf. 1921 above.

1948 Xiong lectures on the history of Chinese philosophy at Zhejiang University.

1949 Xiong travels to Canton [Guangzhou] to stay with long time student, friend, and Liang Shuming's son-in-law Huang Genyong (黃艮庸 no dates). Xiong is accompanied by his adopted daughter Xiong Chi Zhongguang (熊池仲光 no dates) who acts as Xiong's amanuensis. After the establishment of the People's Republic of China on October First, the new government invites Xiong to return to (the now renamed) Beijing University. The Dongsheng Printing House in Hong Kong, publishes Xiong's *The First Continuation of the Essential Sayings of Xiong Shili* (十力語要初續). Also that year, the Renwen Publishing House in Hong Kong publishes Xiong's *A Critique of Han Feizi* (韓非子評論). Cf. 1938-39 above.

1950 The Beijing Dazhong Book Store (大眾書店) publishes Xiong's *Notes on Destroying Illusions and Manifesting the Purpose* (崔惑顯宗記).<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> This is taken from Wang Ruhua *op. cit.* Prof. Wang does not stipulate the Beijing Da Zhong Bookstore and several other cities in China, such as Dalian and Tianjin, had Da Zhong Bookstores. The Beijing Da Zhong Bookstore is, however, the most likely to have published this work as Xiong was recalled to Beijing University in late 1949 after the establishment of the PRC.

1950 The Beijing Dazhong Book Store (大眾書店) publishes Xiong's *Discussing Zhang Jiangling with a Friend* (與友人論張江陵).

1951 The Beijing Dazhong Book Store (大眾書店) publishes Xiong's *Reading the Six Classics* (讀六經).

1953 Dong Biwu (董必武 1886-1975), then a Vice President of the People's Republic of China, and others assist in printing the revised and finalized version of Xiong's *magnum opus A New Treatise on the Uniqueness of Consciousness* (新唯識論). This becomes Xiong's preferred version.

1954 Xiong retires from Beijing University.

1956 The Shanghai Longmen United Bookstore (龍門聯合書店) publishes Xiong's *Original Confucianism* (原儒).

1957 Xiong suffers a heart attack.

1958 The Shanghai Longmen Bookstore (龍門書店) publishes Xiong's *Essay on Substance and Function* (體用論).

1959 The Shanghai Longmen Bookstore (龍門書店) publishes Xiong's *An Article on Understanding Mind* (明心篇). In April, Xiong attends the third session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (中國人民政治協商會議 第三屆理事會).

1961 The Chinese Academy of Sciences publishes Xiong's *The Evolution of Qian and Kun* (乾坤衍).

1963 Xiong writes *Randon Notes from the Studio of Retentions* (存齋隨筆)<sup>7</sup> included as Volume IV in Xiong Shili, *The Collected Works of Xiong Shili* (十力叢書), Shanghai, Chinese Classics Publishing House, Shanghai, Chinese Edition, Kindle Edition.

1964 In December, Xiong attends the fourth Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (中國人民政治協商會議第四屆理事會).

1968 Ill since 1960, Xiong passes away on May 23rd at his home in Shanghai. His three most famous students, Tang Junyi (唐君毅 1909-1978) and Mou Zongsan (牟宗三 1909-1995) in Hong Kong, and Xu Fuguan (徐復觀 1902-1982) in Taiwan, are unable to see Xiong before he passes away. Xiong's son (熊世菩 no dates) and mainland students, such as Ren Jiyu (任繼愈 1916-2009), look after him as best they can but Xiong lives in straitened circumstances. Since the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, the Red Guard have attacked Xiong Shili and

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<sup>7</sup> The title is taken from a line from Zhuge Liang's (諸葛亮 220-265) memorial to the emperor: "So that the ambitions of the common people can be retained..."

vilified him not only for being a traditional scholar, but also for being, as Xu Fuguan has described him, “a living great wall protecting traditional Chinese culture.”<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Text generated by ChatGPT, OpenAI, September 29, 2025, <https://chat.openai.com/chat>