

A Prolific Spirit: Peng Dingqiu's Posthumous Career on the Spirit Altar, 1720–1906*

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Abstract

In this paper, I explore the tension between a historical figure and his posthumous representation through the legacy of the literati-official Peng Dingqiu (1645–1719). I categorize works posthumously attributed to Dingqiu into three types. They are those which (1) internally identified themselves as products of the spirit altar, (2) claimed historical authenticity but whose claims are dubious, and (3) made demonstrably false claims regarding the involvement of the historical Dingqiu. I show that rather than being entirely distinct from one another, these three categories overlapped in a promiscuous editorial cut-and-paste culture. In 1676, Peng Dingqiu was awarded first place in both the metropolitan and palace examinations. This achievement secured his fame and helped establish the Pengs of Suzhou as one of the most eminent family lineages of scholar-officials in the Qing dynasty. Dingqiu was an enthusiastic devotee of Wenchang, the Daoist deity and divine patron of the civil examination system, and he maintained a spirit-writing altar for over forty years. Works received on this altar were included in the major mid- and late Qing anthologies of Wenchang devotion assembled by officials

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such as Huang Zhengyuan, Liu Tishu, and Zhu Gui. Immediately after his death in 1719 Dingqiu returned as a celestial official to other spirit-writing altars in the Jiangnan area. There, he bestowed the same sort of moral exhortations he had previously received from apotheosized Confucians on his own altar. The printing networks of Dingqiu's posthumous oeuvre spanned as far afield as Sichuan and Beijing. I argue that Dingqiu's own examination success was amplified by that of his grandson Peng Qifeng (1701–1784; *jinshi* 1727), who also ranked first in the metropolitan and palace examination. Combined with Dingqiu's advocacy of spirit writing, the immense “grandfather-grandson *optimi*” prestige obtained by Dingqiu and Qifeng caused the Suzhou Pengs in general and Peng Dingqiu in particular to be revered in spirit-writing milieus through the late nineteenth century. In comparing Peng Dingqiu's posthumous oeuvre to that which he wrote while living, I demonstrate the dramatic expansion of the intended audience of morality books from the early to late Qing.

Keywords: Peng Dingqiu (1645–1719), spirit writing, Wenchang, civil service examinations

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一位多產的神祇：彭定求死後乩壇上的天官職業生涯，1720–1906

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摘要

本文分析三種類型的清初文人死後產生的作品：通過乩壇所授的；聲稱為前人所著但其真實性值得懷疑的；明顯是託名的。

探討的中心人物是康熙十七年(1676)曾中二元(會試殿試都第一)的彭定求。定求出生於長洲縣(今蘇州)的名門望族之一。從康熙十五年(1674)以來，司掌科舉功名的文昌帝君頻頻降於定求的家中。定求刊行所收到的乩文以後，劉體恕、黃正元、朱珪等編輯者把這些文獻收入了清中後葉最重要的文昌信仰集成中。

定求去世以後，很快就以新的天官身份開始親降在江南的乩壇中。降乩的過程中他所親授的道德訓誡，和他在世時從自己的乩壇上所收到的那些來自成神儒生降乩的乩文非常相似。而他死後的作品，也在四川和北京等地廣泛流傳。

拙作認為，定求在科舉上的成功，被其孫——同樣獲得二元的彭啟豐——進一步放大，加之定求也推崇扶乩，因而獲得了「祖孫狀元」的定求和啟豐名聲顯赫，使得彭家尤其是彭定求在十九世紀晚期的扶乩團體中備受推崇。在比較了彭定求生前的著述和死後的降乩作品之後，筆者試圖展示出從清初到清末善書預設的讀者群體有了顯著的擴張。

關鍵詞：彭定求 (1645–1719)、扶乩、文昌帝君、狀元