

The Yellow Emperor's tomb is located on Qiaoshan Hill in north Huangling County, one kilometer from the county town. Jushui River runs by the left side of beautiful Qiaoshan. Amid a luxuriant growth of ancient cypresses is the Yellow Emperor's Tomb, 3.6 meters high and 48 meters in circumference.



A distant view of the Yellow Emperor Mausoleum

At the entrance of the mausoleum stands a pavilion in which there is a tombstone with the characters "The Yellow Emperor's Tomb." Behind this structure is another pavilion in which stands a stele carrying the characters "Supreme Guidance from Qiaoshan." Behind it there is a stone tablet erected in 1776 during the reign of Emperor Qian Long of the Qing Dynasty, with the characters "Ancient Yellow Emperor's Tomb on Qiaoshan." To the south of it is a large, tall terrace said to have been built by Emperor Wu Di (140-87 BC) of the Han Dynasty for prayer and for offering sacrifice to the Yellow Emperor over 2,000 years ago after he returned from his expedition to the northern territory of the country.



Tombstone and grave mound of the Yellow Emperor Mausoleum

There are several different accounts relating to the death and burial of the Yellow Emperor. One is the story told in "Title Conferring" from the *Records of the Historian* by Sima Qian (c 145 or 135 BC-?) during the Western Han Dynasty (206 BC-AD 24):

Minister Gong Sun said: The Yellow Emperor mined bronze from Shoushan Mountain and cast a cooking cauldron at the foot of Jingshan. Once the casting was completed, a dragon with drooping whiskers came down and, carrying on its back the Yellow Emperor

with his retinue of 70 high officials; it flew up and away. We small officials couldn't get on, but caught hold of the dragon's drooping whiskers. The whiskers pulled loose and we dropped with the Yellow Emperor's bow. All the people gazed after the Yellow Emperor who was disappearing in the sky and cried as they clung to his bow and the dragon's whiskers.

"Hence, the place where the cauldron was cast was named Cauldron Lake and the emperor's bow was Bow of Crying. Then Emperor Wu Di said: 'Aha, if I could become like the Yellow Emperor, I would leave my wife and children without hesitation.'

"In the winter of the next year Emperor Wu Di ordered over 100,000 soldiers on a north expedition. After coming back from the expedition, they held a memorial ceremony at the Yellow Emperor's tomb on Qiaoshan. Emperor Wu Di said: 'I heard that the Yellow Emperor had gone up to Heaven, why is his tomb here still?' Someone answered: 'After the Yellow Emperor went up to Heaven the officials buried his dresses.'"

According to Sima Qian's *Records*, people in his time thought the Yellow Emperor had gone up to Heaven and there could be no tomb. But, Sima Qian legitimized the tomb as containing the Yellow Emperor's clothing.

No known records tell the true story of the Yellow Emperor's tomb, so we must rely on hearsay. What is true, according to Sima Qian, is that Emperor Wu Di held a memorial ceremony for the Yellow Emperor at the tomb on Qiaoshan after coming back from his north expedition. Thus, it may be safe to say that the Yellow Emperor's tomb dates back at least 2,000 years.

There is also a Temple of the Yellow Emperor at the foot of Qiaoshan, an old structure adjoining the tomb, used for offering sacrifices. There are many centuries-old cypress trees with huge branches towering over the temple ground. The largest one is 19 meters high, with a 10 meters girth at the base, 6 meters in the middle and 2 meters at the top of the trunk, said to have been planted by the Yellow Emperor.



The cypress said to have been planted by the Yellow Emperor more than 5,000 years ago

Below the western steps of the hall there is a small old cypress from which Emperor Wu Di is said to have hung his armour when he camped there and offered his sacrifice to the Yellow Emperor after returning from his north expedition. This incident gives the cypress its name Marshal Cypress. To this day the mark of the nail from which the armour is said to have hung on the tree is still visible. Though these are only hearsay, the size of these cypresses prove they have endured for centuries.



The armour hanging cypress

The temple entrance has five doors with a single eave under the same beam, and fixed on the temple in front is a horizontal board inscribed with the characters "Temple of the Yellow Emperor."



The gate of the Temple of the Yellow Emperor

There are three passage pavilions in the court of the front hall of the temple, with more than 70 steles erected during the Ming and Qing dynasties, and inscriptions by emperors through the ages to memorialize the Yellow Emperor. The inscriptions on the steles clearly describe the sacrificial rituals of the emperors. Beyond the pavilions of steles sits the main hall of the Temple of the Yellow Emperor, along with a seven-room structure with a single eave, a circular corridor and a large front terrace.

The hall is surrounded by old cypresses. A horizontal board inscribed with "The Progenitor of Human Civilization" is hung in the very middle of the hall. Placed in the mid-hall is a tablet dedicated to the Yellow Emperor, marking the Chinese traditional way of ancestor worship. On display inside the hall are legends and materials about the life of the Yellow Emperor, representing the great exploits of this ancient hero and founder of the Chinese nation.



The Great Hall of the Temple of the Yellow Emperor



Carved stone image of the Yellow Emperor