



Qingming Festival

(清明节)

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What is the history of the Qingming Festival?

- 清明节 – “Qingming Jie” → “Pure Bright Festival”
- Zhou Dynasty (1046-221 BCE)
- Ancestral tomb sweeping & showing respect to ancestors
- In 732 BC Emperor Xuanzong of the Tang Dynasty, declared on the first day of the Qingming solar term respect could be paid



What is the history of the Qingming Festival?

- Originally related to climate & nature
- Spring awakening
- Chinese Cold Food Day → Tomb Sweeping
 - Tradition of eating cold food with no fire



What is the origin of the Qingming Festival?



Ancient town of Pingyao near a mountain called Mianshao

Prince Chong'er starving to death → Jie Zitui saved him by cutting piece of flesh of his thigh and cooking it in meat soup to save him

Prince Chon'er lived and became Duke Wen & forgot to reward Jie Zitui → tried to give title to him but Zitui was hiding in the mountain with his mother

Duke Wen set fire to the mountain to get them to come out of fire

Duke found bodies underneath a willow tree in the mountain and held a memorial for them

The next year he found the burnt willow tree with flowers growing beneath and declared the Qingming Festival

How is Qingming Celebrated?

- Tomb upkeep and repair
- Spring outings
- Kite flying
- Putting willow branches near gates



Tomb Sweeping

- Most important tradition
- Only day tombs can be swept
- Present offerings to graves and perform ceremonies
 - Offering foods and tea
 - Burn incense
 - Burning joss paper (representing money)
 - Pray



Willow Branches on Gates

“Put willow branches up on gates; drive ghosts away from the house”

- Willows ward off evil – people wear willow and put them on gates
- Buddhist influence of Guanyin, Goddess of Mercy
 - Used willow branches and magical water to keep evil away



Spring Outings

- 踏青 – Taqing Festival (tread-green)
- Marks beginning of spring in April
- Tree-planting & kite flying
 - Cutting string on kite brings good luck and eliminates diseases



清明节快乐!

Happy Qingming
Festival!

