



The Qiao's Grand Residence, Shanxi 喬家大宅

June 06, 2010

One of the noteworthy mansions built by wealthy Shanxi merchants in the days of the Ming or Qing Dynasties

These mansions were the equivalent of the English castles or the French chateaus

Their grandeur speak to the wealth attained by these merchants



The Qiao's Grand Mansion.....

The Qiao's Grand Mansion's first owner made his fortune selling bean sprouts, bean curd and fodder

In 1756, he decided to build his dream home in a large compound of over 8,000 sq. m. (living area about 60%)

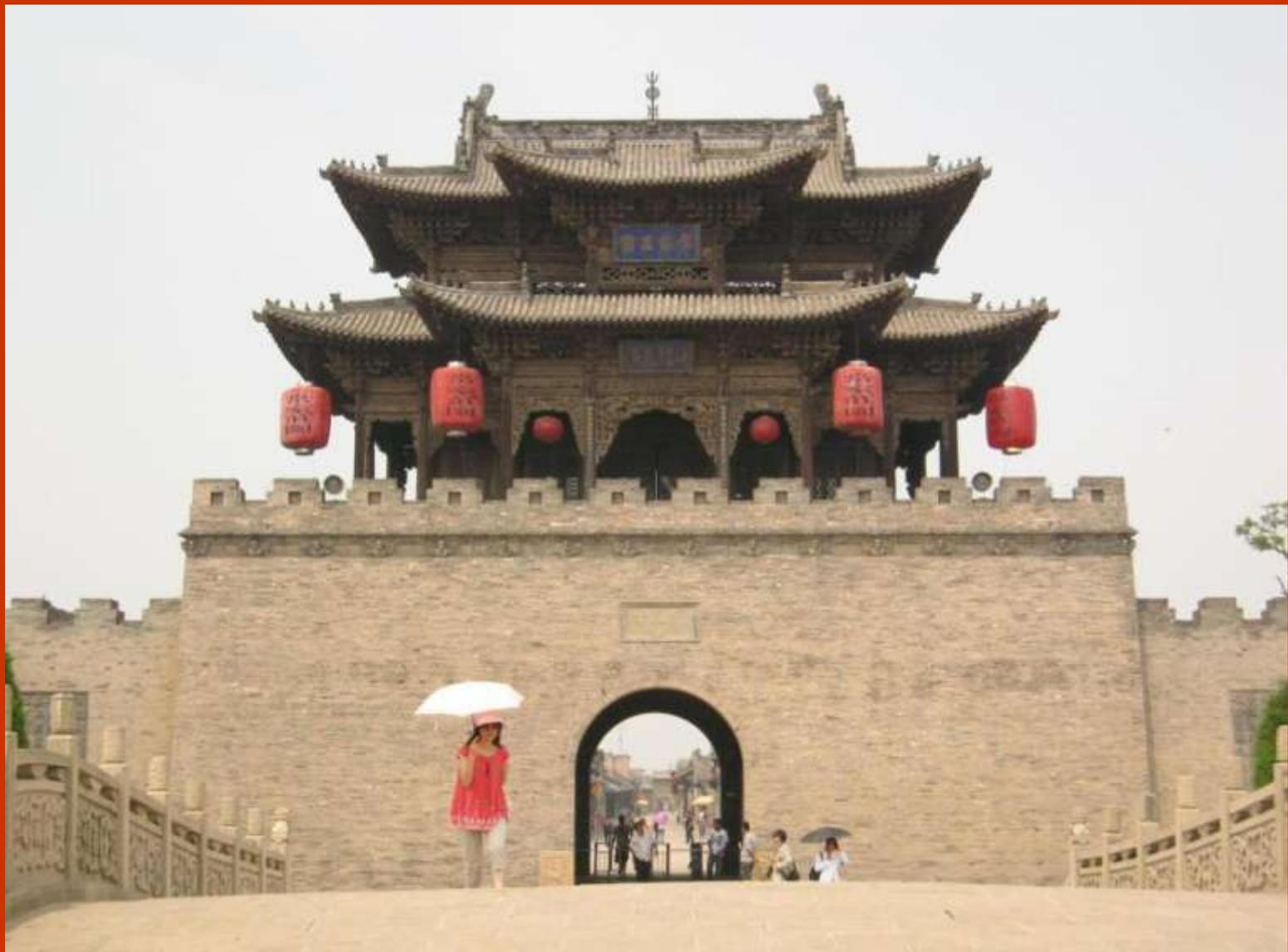
The Qiao's Grand Mansion is not the largest of all the mansions in Shanxi but is known for its exquisite wood and brick carvings, murals and inscribed tablets

The movie "The Red Lanterns" 大紅燈籠高高掛 featuring Gong Li 龔莉, was shot here

The place is about 60 Kilometers south of Taiyuan, capital of Shanxi



After the compound made its name from the movie “The Red Lanterns”, red lanterns became an important décor in the compound



**The mansion was majestic and strongly fortified
To ensure quietness and privacy for the families, the compound was surrounded by
thick walls of 10 meters tall, complete with parapets, battlements and watch towers.**



The front gate that leads to the compound

An 80-meter long passageway separates the compound into two halves
3 major courtyards on each side
20 inner courtyards
313 rooms
At the far end of this passageway is the Ancestral Temple

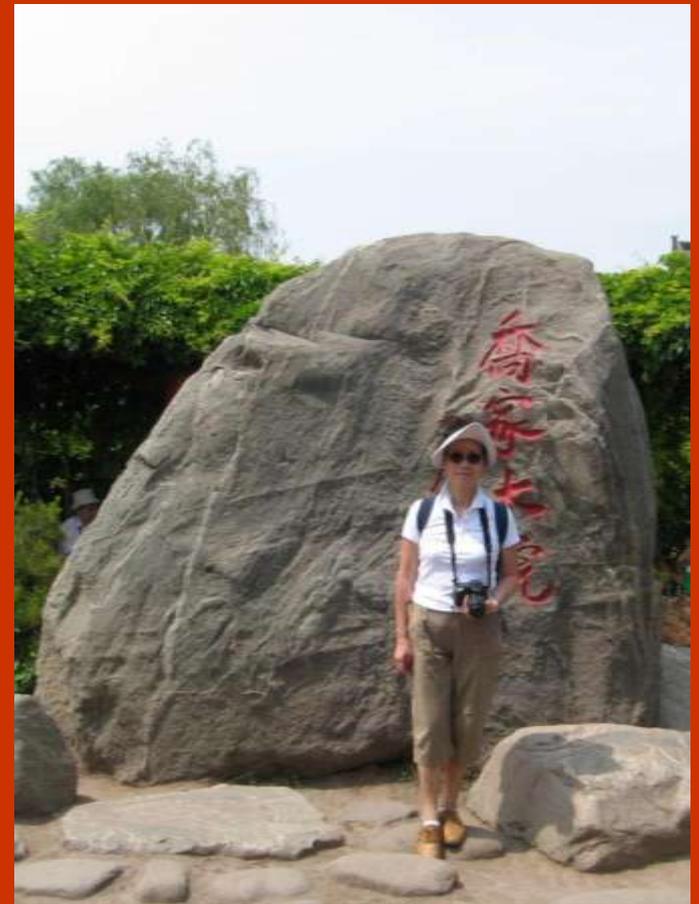




The compound was laid out in the shape of
the Chinese character 囍 (Double Happiness)



The Qiao's Grand Mansion
was once known as
在中堂



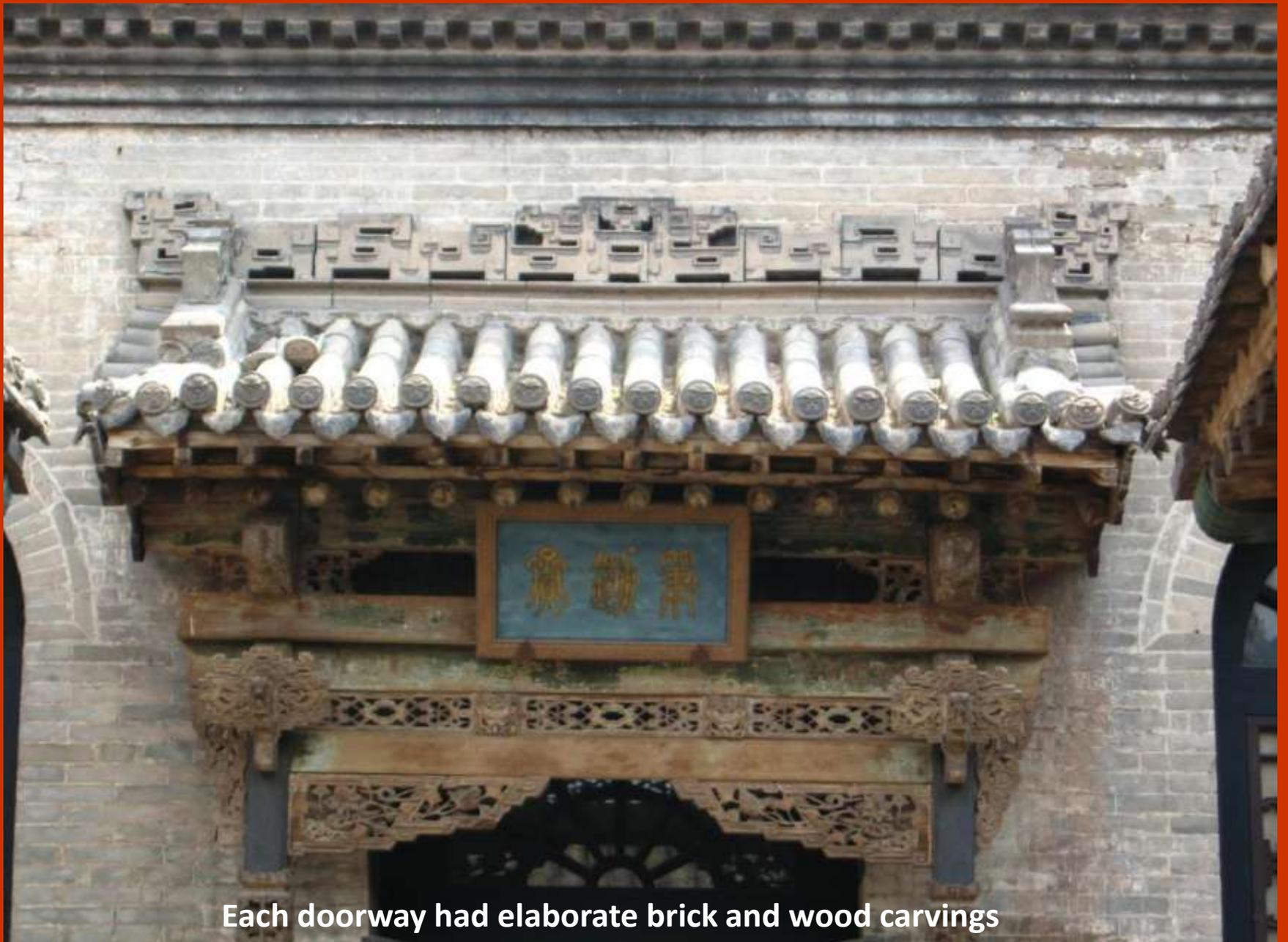


Each courtyard had its own name



The inner courtyard





Each doorway had elaborate brick and wood carvings



The roofs of the doorways looked similar but in fact, they were different

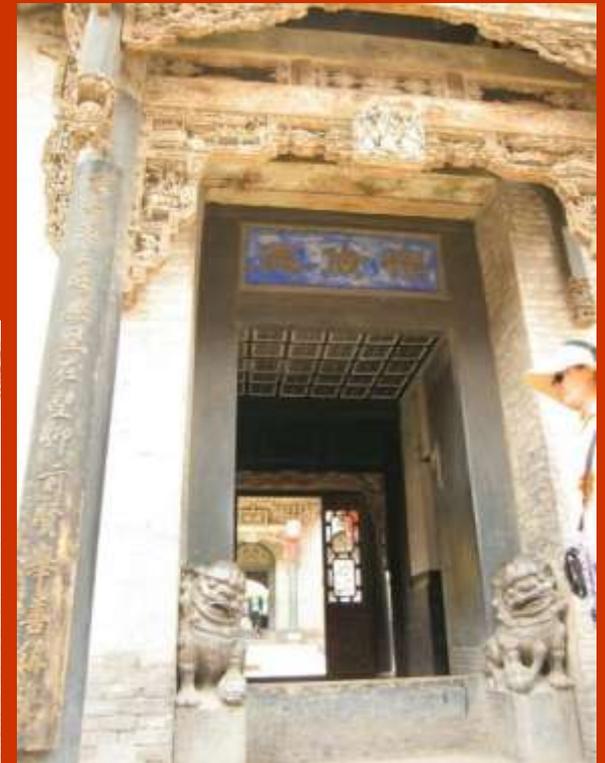


The carvings under the eaves were detailed and fine





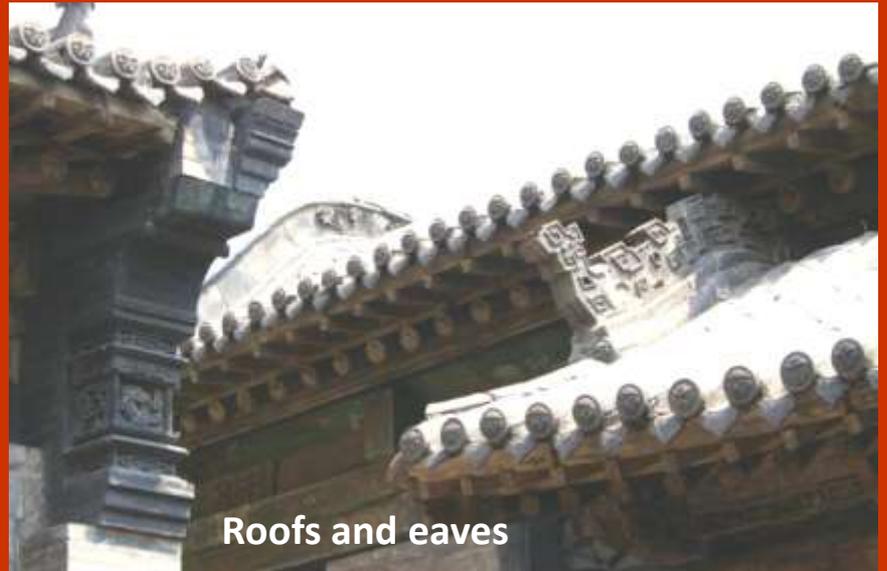
The windows bore different patterns



Stone carvings....
...the lions that guard the
entrance



Chimney



Roofs and eaves



Corner stone

Carvings were everywhere



Passageway between inner courts



Above the door



Even the lock had style



An inscribed stone tablet



The phrases on the plates were inspirational



.....meaningful



....educational, interesting



They had different calligraphy styles



The exquisite wood carvings



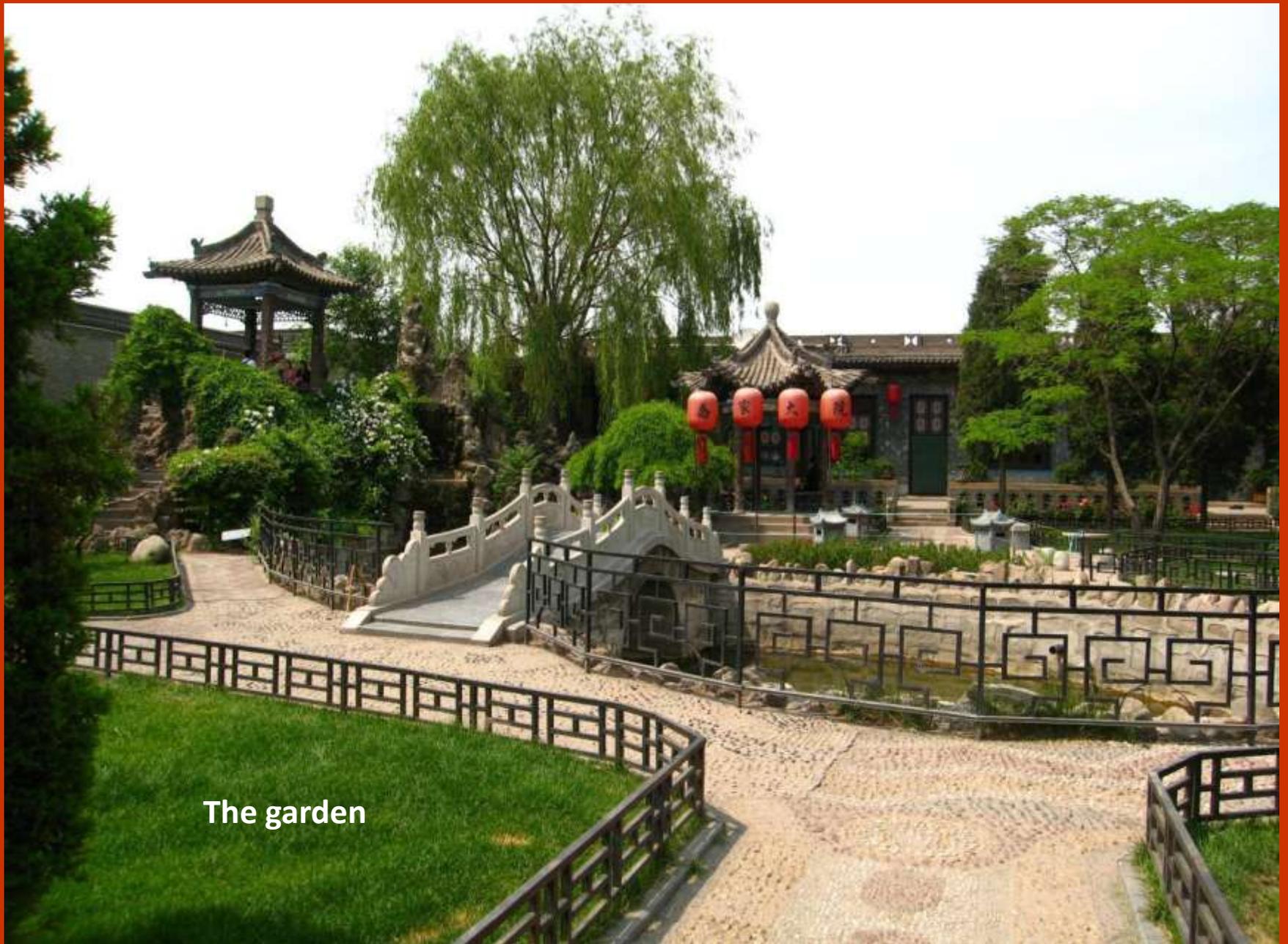
...more figurines, birds, fruits.....



...more fruits, buns, Chinese stationery and musical instruments



and....a choo-choo train too !!!



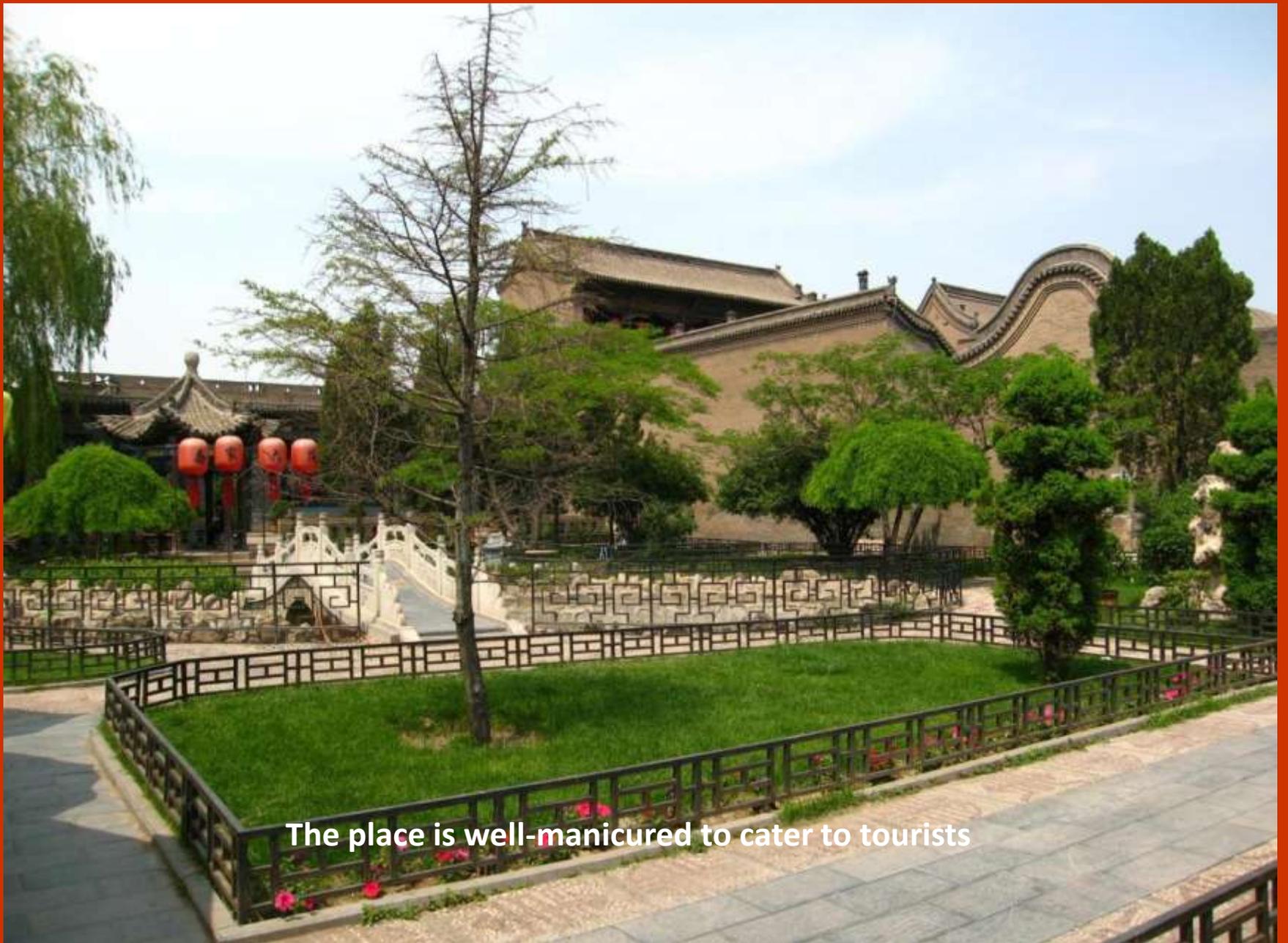
The garden



A glimpse into the life of the wealthy in those days



2 of the 3 family treasures



The place is well-manicured to cater to tourists



I had expected a much larger residence before I came



Nonetheless, it's a place worth visiting



Ciao