



The Qiao's Grand Residence, Shanxi 喬家大宅

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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%)

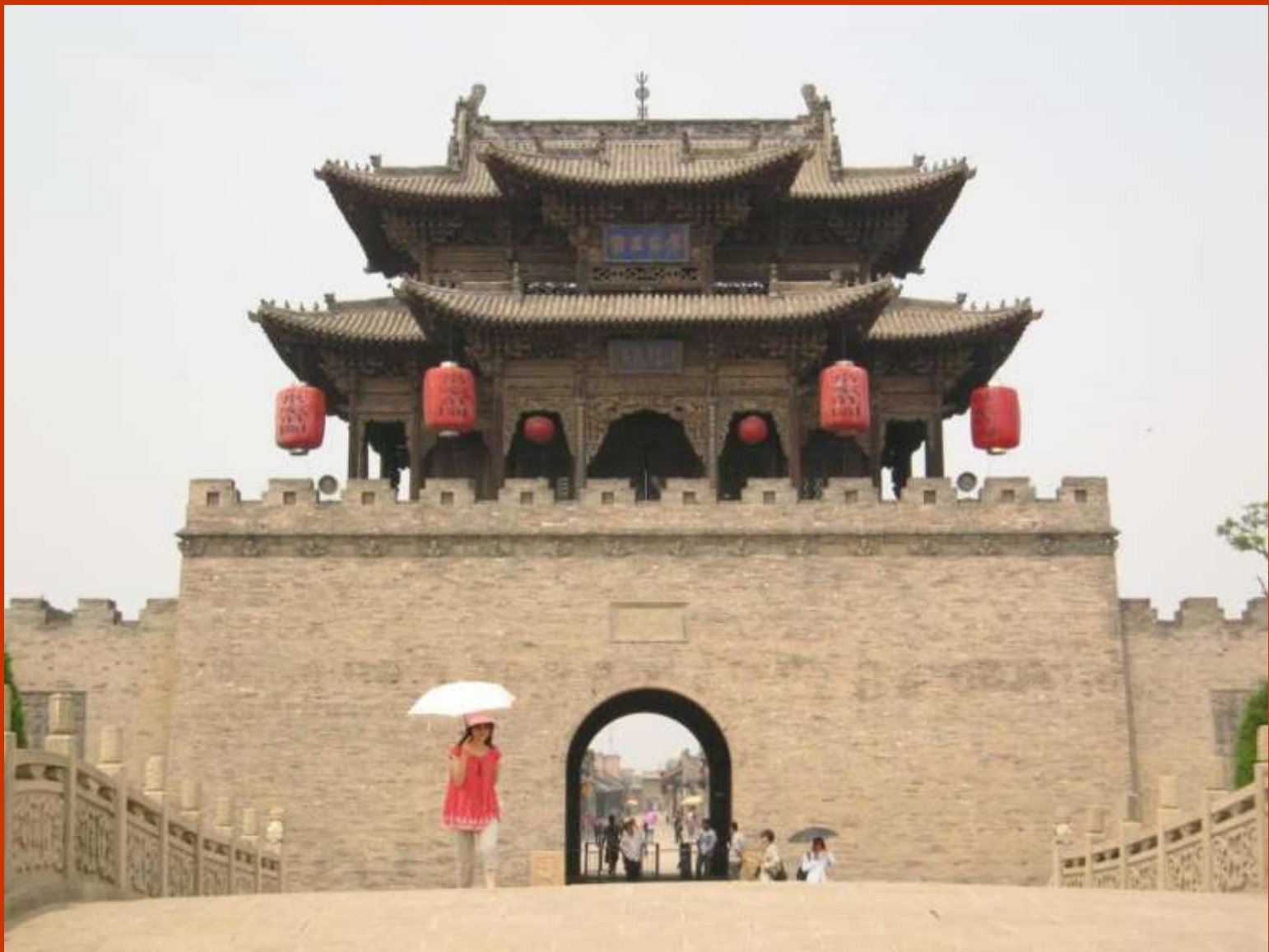
The Qiao's Grand Mansion is not the largest of all the mansions in Shanxi but is known for its exquisite wood and brick carvings, murals and inscribed tablets

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



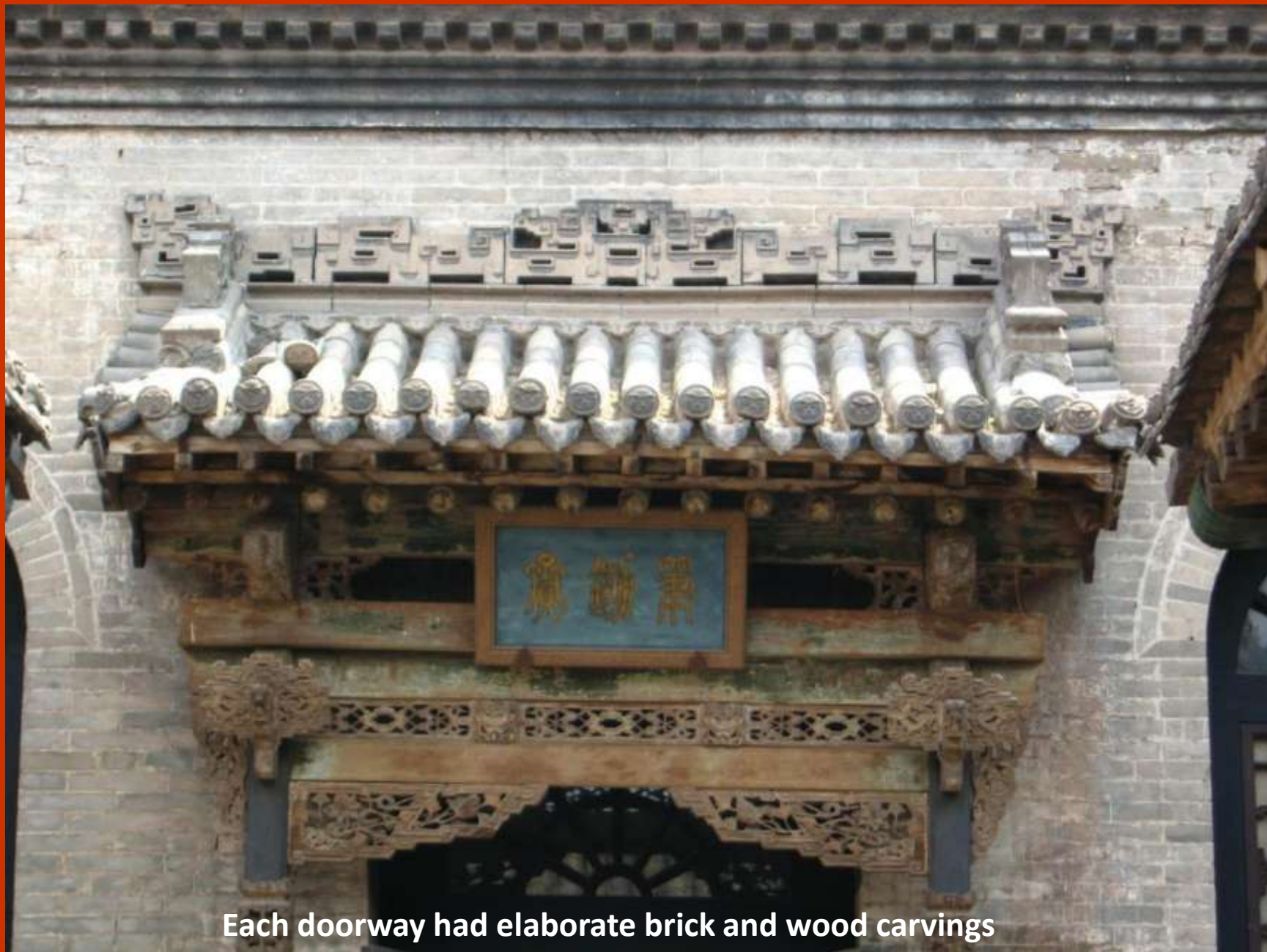


Each courtyard had its own name



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





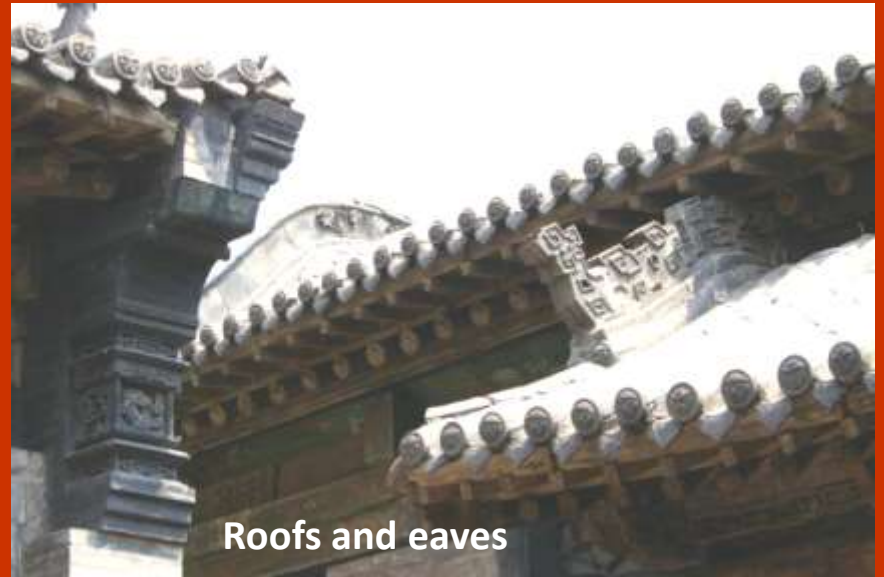
The windows bore different patterns



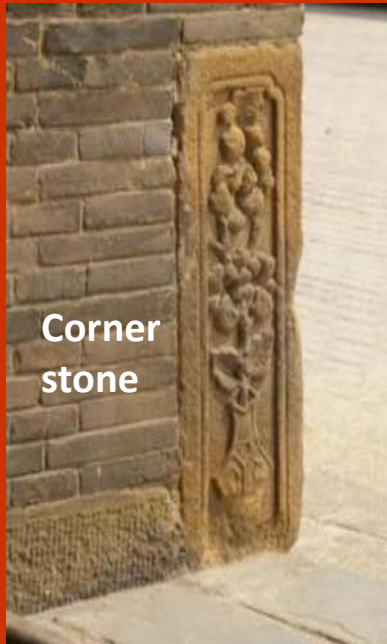
**Stone carvings....
...the lions that guard the
entrance**



Chimney



Roofs and eaves

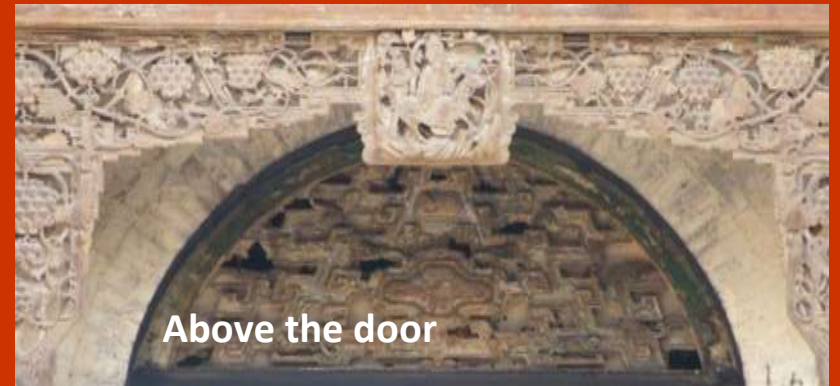


Corner
stone

Carvings were
everywhere



Passageway between inner
courts



Above the door



Even the lock had style

夕臨畫明乾動坤靜物稟乎性
人賦于命賢賤賢愚壽夭衰盛
諒夫自然冥數潛定蕙生數寸
松高百尺水潤火炎輪曲轅良
或金或錫或玉或石茶苦菰甘
烏黔鷲白性不可易體不可後
握苗則悴續鳧乃悲巢者宮穴
泓者寧馳竹柏寒茂桐柳秋衰
關里泣麟傳蠟肖象馮衍空過
千私驪相健義勿用止足可尚
霧順安時吉祿長富省

居維協洽夏舉月

潯陽邑趙昌書

少康



An inscribed stone tablet



The phrases on the plates were inspirational



.....meaningful



.....educational, interesting



They had different calligraphy styles



The exquisite wood carvings



...with figurines



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



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



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



The garden

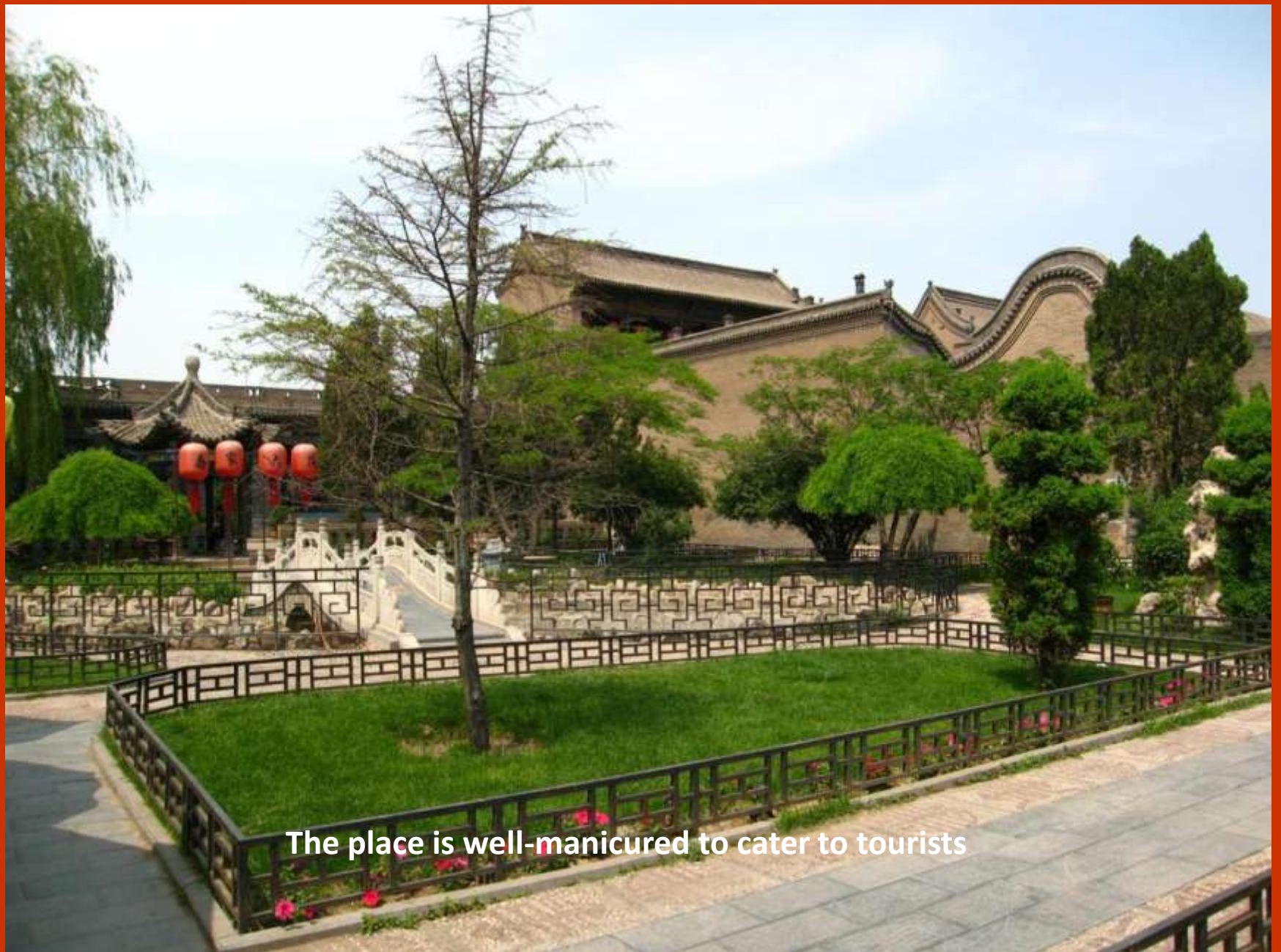


A glimpse into the life of the wealthy in those days

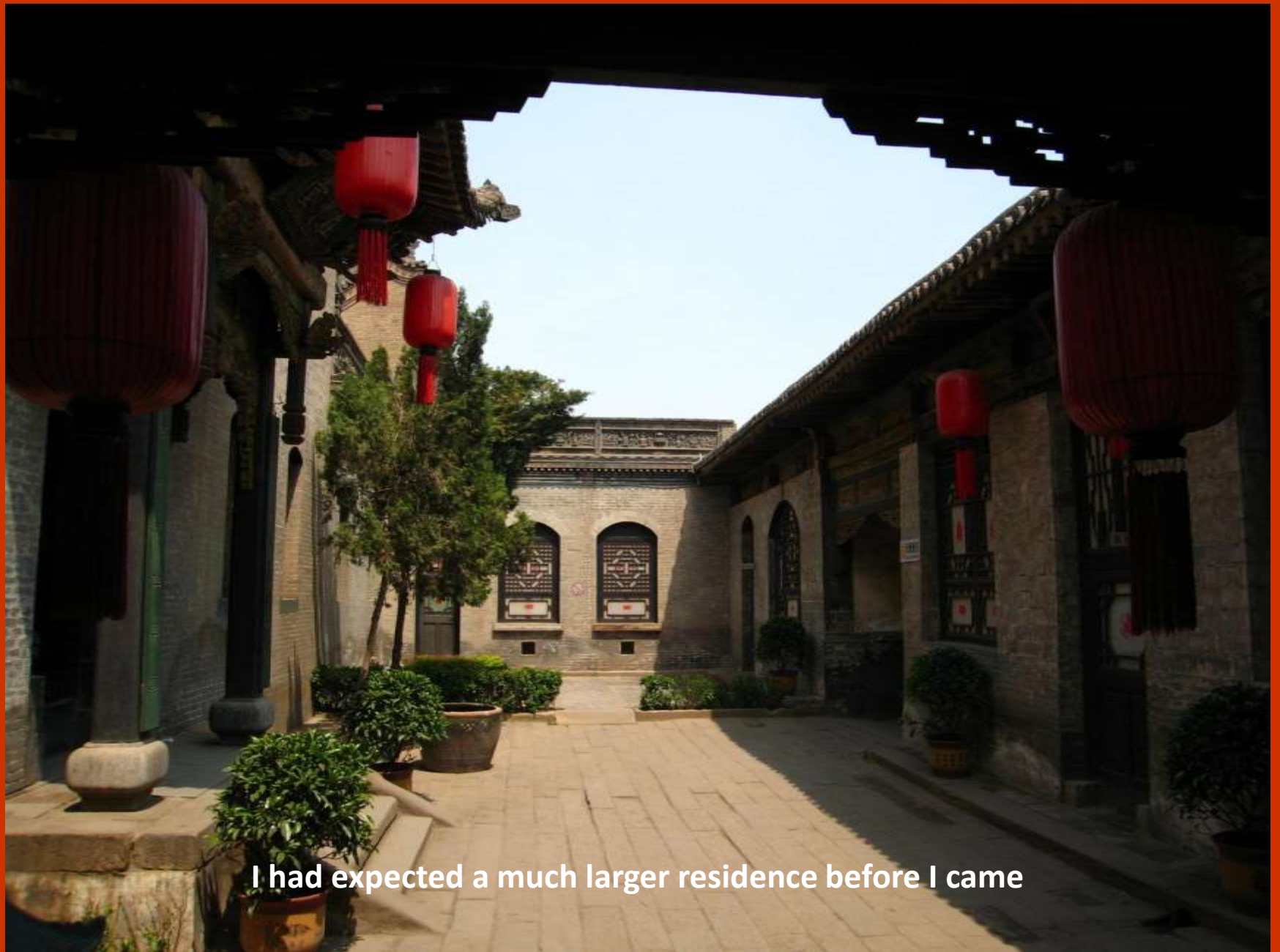


2 of the 3 family treasures





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