

National Monument Li Tengfang mansion Daxi, Taoyuan



Notice for visitors |

- Eating and Smoking are prohibited within the monument.
- Please do not run, play around and make loud noises within the monument.
- Please do not touch, shake or sit on any objects.
- Please do not bring in pets or bicycles.
- Please do not enter restricted zones or open the windows/doors without permission.
- Please make appointments in advance for any interviews or group visits.

Opening Hours | From Tuesday to Sunday, 09:30 ~ 17:00

Every Monday, Chinese Lunar New Year's Eve, the first day of the Chinese lunar new year, and any necessary closing day by announcement.

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Contact Number | (03)3888600

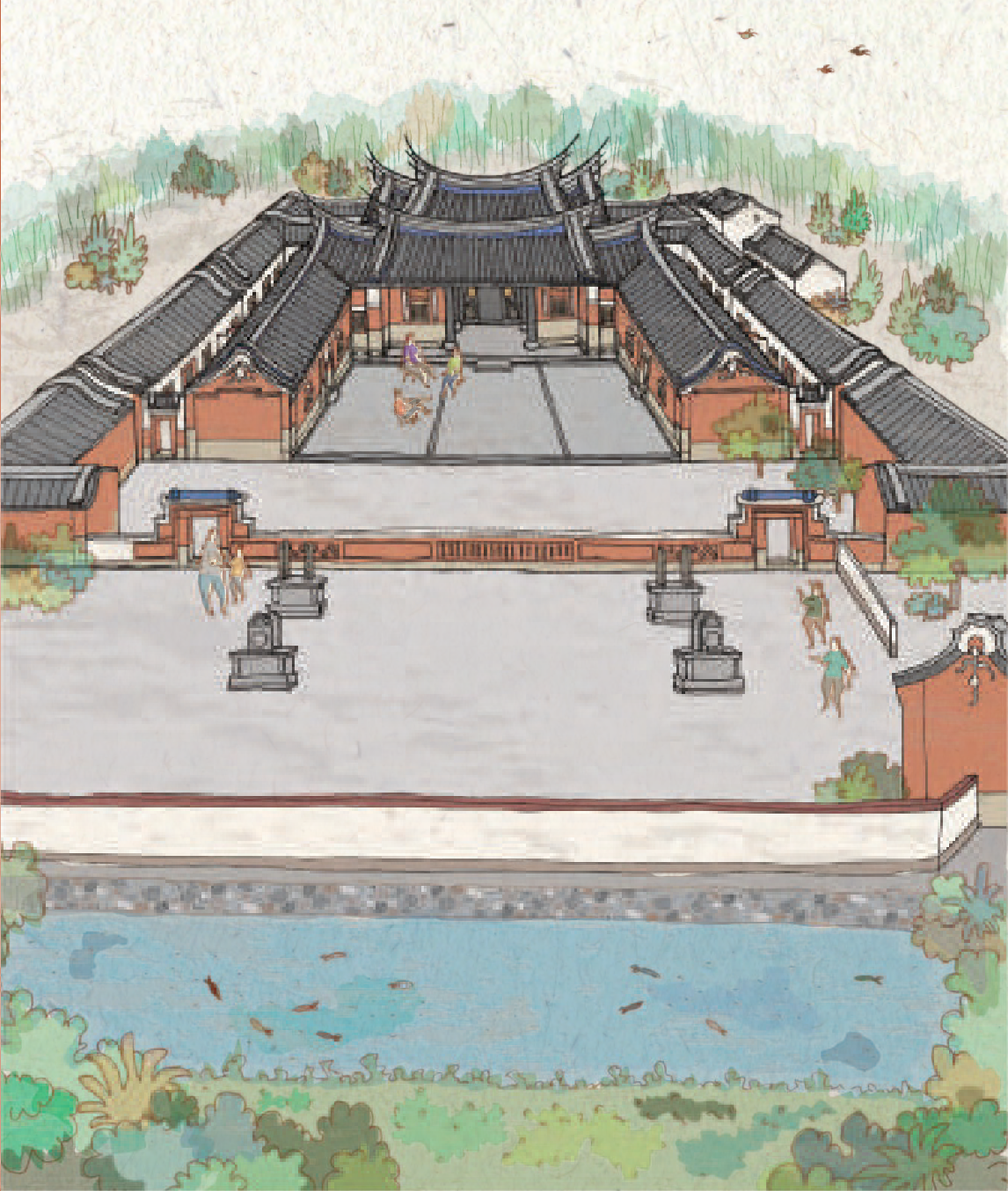
Administration | 桃園市立大溪木藝生態博物館
DAXI WOOD ART ECOMUSEUM, TAOYUAN

Owner | Legal Foundation of Li Jinxing Kong Worshipping Public Sector

Execution | 台灣古厝再生協會

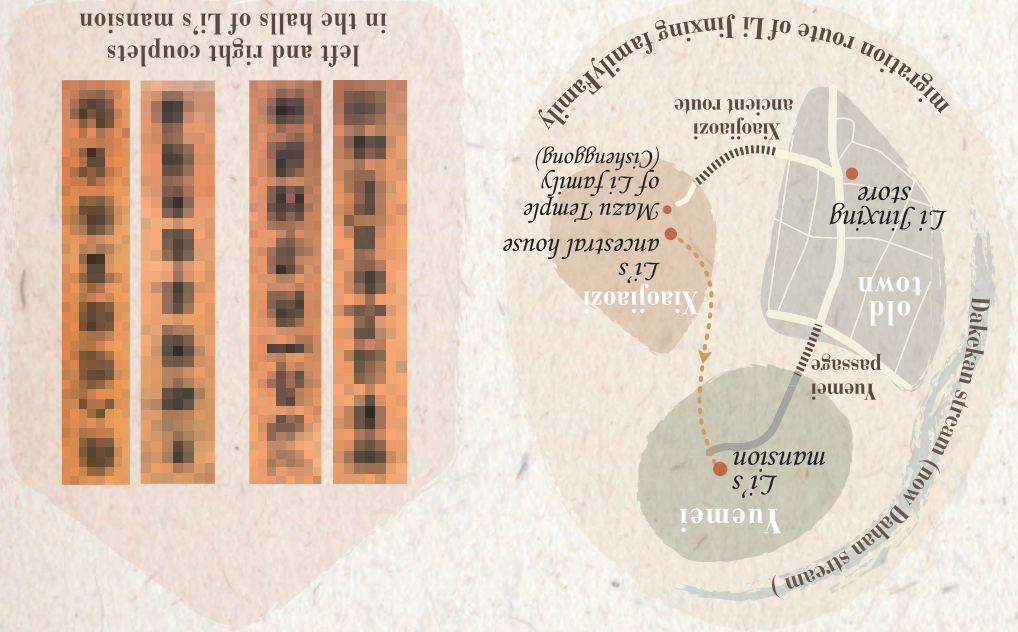
Li Tengfang Mansion

architecture tour guide



The Li's mansion has two halls and four wings, based on the layout of a traditional four-section courtyard house with two wings extended forward, which form a three-section compound surrounding the outer courtyard. All the main spaces locate on the central axis, among them the highest is the main hall, acting as the most important spiritual space. The next highest is the foyer, which forms an atrium along with the living space of the right and left wings and becomes the core of this dwelling compound. The heights of roofs and floors are all based on the principles of "from the back to the front", "from the inside to the outside", and "the left is more honorable than the right". There are six pairs of flying *yanwei* (swallow-tailed) ridges, matched and surrounded by *mabe* (horse-back) ridges of Elemental attributes, on the roofs of the foyer, main hall, north and south halls, which form the main space of square shape. Red bricks, black tiles, columns, and doors conform the color scheme of "red palaces and black ancestor houses" recorded in *Liji* (Book of Rites). These features, together with white walls retaining from Hakka architecture in Zhao'an, and the sapphire blue lines highlighting the roofs and walls compose the elegant tone of a *juren*'s house. The exquisite woodcarvings, delicate calligraphies and paintings and the couplets on columns form the architectural style of a refined scholar's house. The connotation of many calligraphies and paintings not only celebrates the *juren* status, but also encourages future generations to uphold the family inherited intrinsic of kindness, sincerity, honesty and truthfulness in their living. The exquisite woodcarvings, painted surfaces and calligraphies all share extremely high artistic standards and definitely are the must-see during your visit.

The elegance of architecture

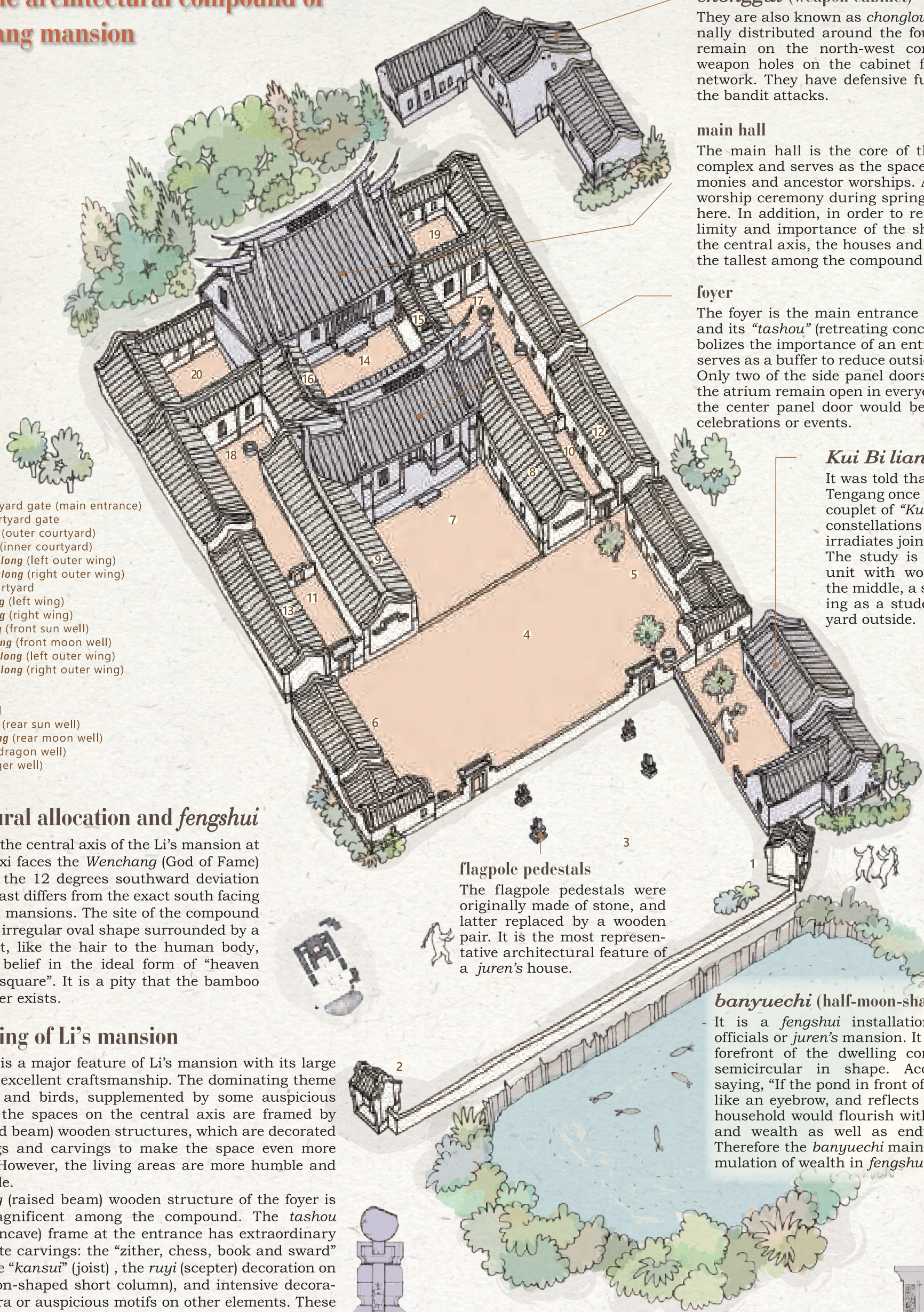


The ancestor of Li family in Daxi was established from Chengji, Longxi, Gansu province and moved to Zhao'an county, Fujian province at the end of Song dynasty. The eleventh generation ancestor of Zhao'an, Li Shanming, who was Li Tengfang's great-grandfather, moved to Taiwan during the reign of Qing emperor Qianlong. They landed in Tainan and later moved to Xijiaozi in Daxi, Taoyuan. Li Shanming's fifth child Li Xianhua had successfully cultivated the Yuemei area. Unfortunately he passed away early and left his wife Liao Cou raising three sons, Li Bingsheng (father of Li Tengfang), Li Dusheng, and Li Zhensheng, with difficulties. Li Bingsheng(1793-1862) ran a successful rice business between Monga and Tamsui, with excellent use of shipping facilities of Dakakan stream. Li was well respected and eagerly participated in local public welfare. With Li Dusheng in charge of milling rice, Li Zhensheng leading the farming force, the Li family's business was thriving along the upper and lower streets of Daxi downtown. They also built the Yuemei passage to connect Yuemei and downtown Daxi. The family's business was booming and they started a family store called "Jinxing".

Li Tengfang (1814-1879) was the third son of Li Bingsheng, originally named Li Youqing. The name "Tengfang" is the official seal bestowed by the Qing emperor. Li Tengfang earned a *xiucai* (certified student) title when he was 43 years old in 1856 (the sixth year of Xianfeng reign), a *gongsheng* (tribute scholar) title in 1859 (the ninth year of Xianfeng reign), and finally took the 21st place of *juren* degree in 1865 (the fourth year of Tongzhi reign). Therefore the location and color of Li's mansion, and the two pairs of flagpole pedestals and clamping stones on the outer courtyard all accord with the norm of a *juren*'s dwelling, characteristic of Li's glory for the family and the area. The construction of the Li's mansion started in 1860 and completed in 1864. It is now a national monument in Taoyuan and one of the ten most representative traditional house compounds in Taiwan.

History

The whole architectural compound of Li Tengfang mansion



chonggui (weapon cabinet)
They are also known as *chonglou* (arsenal), originally distributed around the four corners, only remain on the north-west corner. Numerous weapon holes on the cabinet form a crossfire network. They have defensive function to resist the bandit attacks.

main hall
The main hall is the core of the Li's mansion complex and serves as the space for family ceremonies and ancestor worships. Annual ancestor worship ceremony during spring and fall is held here. In addition, in order to reinforce the sublimity and importance of the shrine located on the central axis, the houses and foundations are the tallest among the compound.

foyer
The foyer is the main entrance to the mansion, and its "tashou" (retreating concave) shape symbolizes the importance of an entrance space and serves as a buffer to reduce outside interferences. Only two of the side panel doors leading toward the atrium remain open in everyday life, whereas the center panel door would be open on major celebrations or events.

Kui Bi lianhui study
It was told that the study of Li Tengang once had a horizontal couplet of "Kui Bi lianhui" (the constellations of Kui and Bi irradiates jointly) on the lintel. The study is an independent unit with worship shrine in the middle, a single wing serving as a student room, and a yard outside.

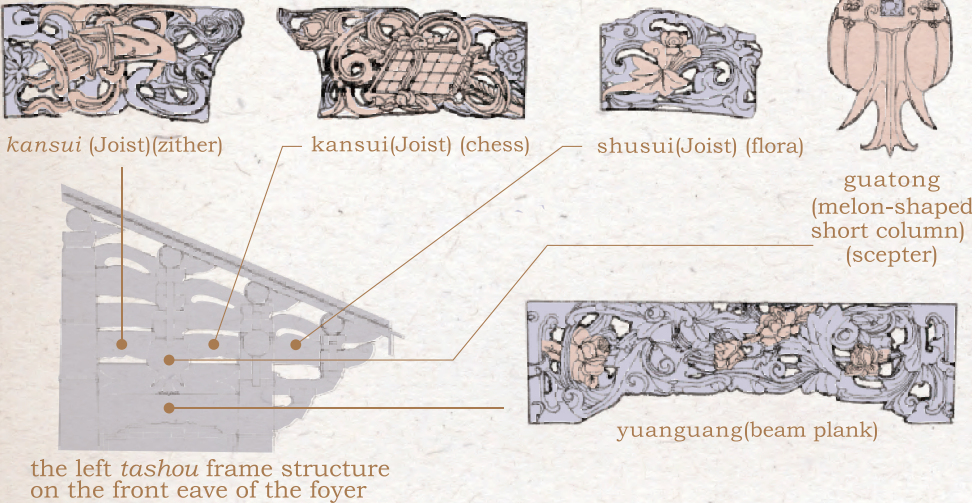
Architectural allocation and fengshui

It is said that the central axis of the Li's mansion at Yuemei in Daxi faces the *Wenchang* (God of Fame) position, and the 12 degrees southward deviation off the southeast differs from the exact south facing of most grand mansions. The site of the compound used to be an irregular oval shape surrounded by a bamboo forest, like the hair to the human body, implying the belief in the ideal form of "heaven round, earth square". It is a pity that the bamboo forest no longer exists.

Woodcarving of Li's mansion

Woodcarving is a major feature of Li's mansion with its large quantity and excellent craftsmanship. The dominating theme is of flowers and birds, supplemented by some auspicious patterns. All the spaces on the central axis are framed by *tailiang* (raised beam) wooden structures, which are decorated with paintings and carvings to make the space even more spectacular. However, the living areas are more humble and elegant in style.

The *tailiang* (raised beam) wooden structure of the foyer is the most magnificent among the compound. The *tashou* (retreating concave) frame at the entrance has extraordinary complex ornate carvings: the "zither, chess, book and sword" carving on the "*kansui*" (joist), the *ruyi* (scepter) decoration on *guatong* (melon-shaped short column), and intensive decorations with flora or auspicious motifs on other elements. These delicate wood carvings accentuate the robust and powerful wooden components such as beams, columns and *guatong*.



flagpole pedestals
The flagpole pedestals were originally made of stone, and latter replaced by a wooden pair. It is the most representative architectural feature of a *juren's* house.

banyuechi (half-moon-shaped pond)
It is a *fengshui* installation exclusive for officials or *juren's* mansion. It is located at the forefront of the dwelling compound and is semicircular in shape. According to the saying, "If the pond in front of the gate shapes like an eyebrow, and reflects on the gate, the household would flourish with male offspring and wealth as well as enduring blessing." Therefore the *banyuechi* mainly denotes accumulation of wealth in *fengshui*.

Flagpole pedestal and stone carving

There are two pairs of flagpole pedestal in the center of Li's mansion outer courtyard. The clamping stones on the pedestal were engraved with the sentences "established in the fourth year Yichou of Tongzhi reign, making up the main category of the previous year Jiazi" and "established by Li Tengfang, ranked the twenty-first of *juren* by passing examination", which marked the inauguration year, category and ranking of Li's *juren* status, and symbolized the glory of Li family and local area.

The flagpole pedestals both have shallow stone carvings, with patterns of "flags (pray), balls (beg), halberd (auspiciousness), chime (celebration)" and "tiger, leopard, lion, elephant", and with "a hornless dragon tiger swallows foot" pattern over the bottom of the four pedestal corners.

