

RESEARCH ARTICLE

China Receives Utzon: The Role of Jørn Utzon's 1958 Study Trip to China in His Architectural Maturity

Chen-Yu Chiu

Both before and after his study trip to China in 1958, Danish architect Jørn Utzon (1918–2008) consistently cited dynastic Chinese architecture as one of his essential design ideals. This article commences with a reconstruction, using archival and anecdotal evidence, of Jørn Utzon's 1958 study trip to China with his close friend, the noted Norwegian architect Geir Grung (1926–89). The investigation seeks to explain both why, as a student, Utzon was so interested in the civilisation of China and how his carefully planned journey yielded Utzon both an intuitive grasp of ideas of Chinese architecture, and, most importantly, a continuing interest in China's traditional systems of building construction. The answers could add to a methodological and theoretical framework for understanding Utzon's work.

Introduction

Both before and after his study trip to China in 1958, the Danish architect Jørn Utzon (1918–2008) consistently cited dynastic Chinese architecture as one of his essential design ideas and ideals (Faber and Utzon, 1947; Utzon 1962; 1970). However, Utzon never clarified the *precise* role of Chinese building traditions in his work. Utzon did not publish any substantial material of this pivotal study trip: all we have is his fleeting remark that '[...] the trip to China is much more than expected.'¹ How did Utzon perceive Chinese architecture during this important journey? What was China's precise role in Utzon's maturity as an architectural master? These questions have not yet been discussed.²

This article commences with a reconstruction, using archival and anecdotal evidence, of Utzon's trip to China, which he made with his close friend, the noted Norwegian architect Geir Grung (1926–89). The Utzon Archives at Aalborg was a major source, as was the collection of Jan Utzon in Saunte, Denmark, and interviews with Jørn Utzon's family and close friends, including architect and architectural historian Tobias Faber (1915–2010) and Else Glahn (1921–2011), and Grung's second wife, Dagny Kjøde. Surviving archival materials including a detailed travel itinerary and information collected through interviews encourage an examination of Utzon's early perceptions of China, both before and during this pivotal adventure.³ The analysis seeks to explain why, as a student, Utzon was so interested in the civilisation of China and how his carefully planned journey yielded Utzon an intuitive grasp of ideas of Chinese architecture, and, most importantly, a continuing interest in China's traditional systems of building construction.

This article then establishes built-form analogies between Utzon's 1958 study of Chinese architecture *in situ* and his design proposals over the three decades following the trip, with a view to retracing the path of Utzon's growing understanding of Chinese architecture during this period. The analysis includes Utzon's design proposals for the Sydney Opera House (1958–66), Bagsværd Church (1968–76), the National Assembly of Kuwait (1972–84), the architect's second house on Majorca, Can Feliz (1991–94), and several important proposals within his 'Platforms and Plateaus' theme: a manifesto with his now famous sketch of 'Chinese houses and temples' (Utzon 1962). This investigation demonstrates that Utzon's once-in-a-lifetime voyage to China had a profound and lasting impact on the aesthetic, architectonic and spatial principles of his buildings and projects. This article aims to add to the considered methodological and theoretical framework for understanding Utzon's work.

Utzon's Early Perception of China

The young Utzon's affinity with China is intimately connected to his socio-cultural background and personal experiences. Together, these represent an amalgamation that assimilated diverse aspects of China taken by different people before and during Utzon's lifetime. As one would expect, the path leading to Utzon's reception of Chinese art and architecture can be traced back not only to the intermittent connection between China and the Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts in Copenhagen where Utzon had studied from 1937 to 1942, but also to Utzon's stay in Stockholm from 1942 to 1945. Analyzing this connection reveals the broad context and content of China and its relationship with the Nordic countries that provided Utzon the impetus to construct his own understanding of Chinese building culture through his pivotal trip in 1958.

Utzon's uncle, Aksel Einar Utzon-Frank (1888–1955), was a well-known sculptor and professor at the Royal

Academy. He played a significant role not only in Utzon's architectural career but also in Utzon's early interest in China. Originally, before he entered the school of architecture at the Royal Academy, Jørn Utzon wanted to be an artist. However, his uncle encouraged him to become an architect, as architecture was financially 'safer than the artist's vocation' (Drew 1999: 23–24). Meanwhile, in his uncle's studio at the Royal Academy, young Utzon encountered 'many kinds of things' about China.⁴ Although Utzon-Frank never went to China, he had a large collection of Imperial Chinese decorated roof tiles, statues of deities and noble women, ceremonial objects, paintings and masks (Rindholt 1942). His Chinese collection included the 1919 edition of the *Yingzao fashi*⁵ 营造法式 [State Building Standards] (Fig. 1), which stimulated Utzon's early interest in Chinese architecture. This *Yingzao fashi* was originally purchased in Shanghai in the early 1920s by Osvald Sirén (1879–1966), an important art historian of traditional Chinese art, architecture, gardens and paintings, and later sent to Utzon-Frank as a personal gift. Utzon's first encounter with the *Yingzao fashi* was most probably in Utzon-Frank's studio before he entered the Royal Academy. In the late 1930s, Utzon-Frank donated this book to the library of the Royal Academy, where Utzon and his two lifetime friends who also studied at the Royal Academy, Tobias Faber and Else Glahn, looked at it in great detail.⁶ This encounter certainly encouraged Utzon's acquisition in 1958 of the 1925 edition of *Yingzao fashi* in Beijing during his trip to China (Bech 2007).⁷ Utzon's eldest son, Jan Utzon, further explained: 'My grand-uncle told my father to search for inspiration from the unknown Eastern cultures, instead of the West with which we were more familiar'.⁸

During Utzon's study at the Royal Academy, Aage Marcus (1888–1985) was the director of its library, from 1928 to 1958. In 1941, Marcus published *Den Blaa Drage* [The Blue Dragon], a romantic introduction to the mysticism of

Chinese art, religion and philosophy. Marcus synthesized much of the previous international China scholarship, especially that concerning Taoism, Zen Buddhism and Confucianism. Literally, *Drage* is an extended chapter of Lin Yutang's *My Country and My People* (1937), one of Utzon's most favourite books, which was translated into Danish in 1938 and undoubtedly inspired Marcus's writing (Marcus 1941: 200). Moreover, inspired by Osvald Sirén's seminal book of 1917, *Rytm og Form* [Rhythm and Form], Marcus also adapted Sirén's ideas about Chinese art and artists. With Sirén's help, Marcus included many illustrations of Chinese calligraphy and painting in *Drage* to support his eclectic occultism.⁹ Like Marcus's previous work, *Mystik og Mystikere* [Mysticism and Mystics] (1930), *Drage* was very popular in the Academy during Utzon's time, and he certainly read this book (Weston 2002: 20).¹⁰

The Royal Academy students' interest in China could have been reinforced by a 1:20 scale model of a Chinese palace building from the Qing Dynasty (1644–1912) in the same library (Fig. 2).¹¹ This two-metre-long model was commissioned in 1933 by Danish missionary architect Johannes Prip-Møller (1889–1943) and paid for by the New Carlsberg Foundation (Faber 1994: 53). Through Prip-Møller's friendship with the prominent Chinese architectural historian Liang Sicheng (1901–72), this model was constructed by a Chinese craftsman, Yang Wenchi, and then painted by Yuan Shihchang, under the supervision of the Society for Research in Chinese Architecture in Beijing (1933–35).¹² Even though it had a removable roof, the interior decoration and painting had to be omitted to reduce the cost.¹³ The exhibition of this large model and its related publication written in 1937 by Prip-Møller for *Arkitekten Maanedshæfte* provided Utzon with a powerful encounter with Chinese building culture (Prip-Møller 1937: 65–68). In the same year, Prip-Møller's monumental work was completed with the publication of *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*. In 1944, Antonette Prip-Møller

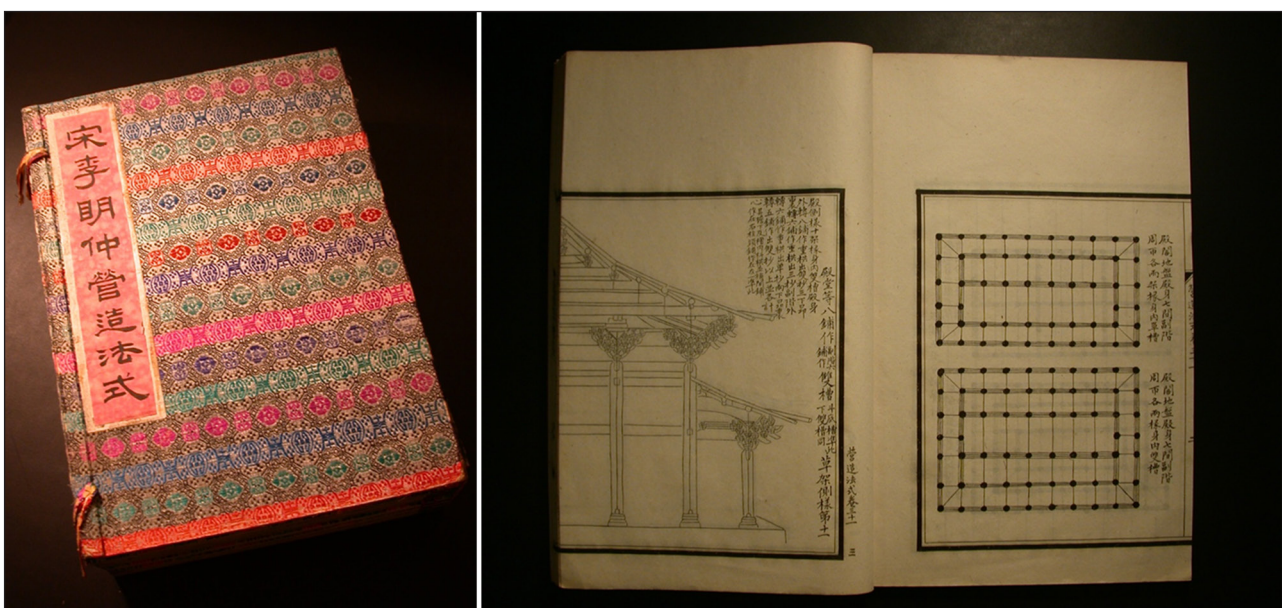


Figure 1: Einar Utzon-Frank's 1919 edition of *Yingzao fashi* in the Danish National Art Library [Danmarks Kunstbibliotek] (the original library of the Architecture School at Royal Danish Academy). Photos by the author.



Figure 2: The model of a traditional Chinese palace in the Qing Dynasty style ordered by Johannes Prip-Møller, now in the National Museum of Denmark. Photo by the author.

(1888–1977) published *Kina før og nu* [*China Before and Now*], a collection of articles by Prip-Møller about Chinese history, art, architecture and Buddhism, after her husband's death in 1943. Although Utzon did not know Prip-Møller, he subsequently acquired *Kina før og nu* and two copies of *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries* in Hong Kong during his trip to China.¹⁴

At the Royal Academy, Utzon attended lectures by Kay Fisker (1893–1965) and Steen Eiler Rasmussen (1898–1990), which often included Chinese architecture as case studies.¹⁵ Kay Fisker was granted a travelling scholarship in 1922 by the East Asiatic Company (EAC) to travel to China and Japan, as a guest on one of EAC's ships. With his wife, Kay Fisker spent four months in China and two months in Japan (Faber 1995: 34–35). In 1923, Fisker published his article 'Peking' in *Arkitekten* with his own photographs. In the same year, Steen Eiler Rasmussen was granted the same travelling scholarship to travel to China for his extraordinary academic performances. During his five-month stay in China, Rasmussen made numerous photographs and sketches as he travelled to Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, Hangzhou and Suzhou. These materials provide a solid ground for Rasmussen's many writings related to China in his later career.

Indeed, Utzon read many of these publications by Rasmussen. Utzon knew of Rasmussen's trip to China in 1923 from his lectures and his 1935 book *Billedbog fra en Kinarejse* [*Pictures from a Journey to China*]. Later, Rasmussen edited it and published it again in 1958 as

Rejse i Kina [*Travel in China*]. In Rasmussen's *London: The Unique City* (first published in Danish in 1934, English in 1937), he described the so-called Chinese ideas and the role of William Chambers in the emergence of 'The English Landscape Garden' (Rasmussen 1967: 154–65). In *Towns and Buildings: Described in Drawings and Words* (first published in Danish in 1949, English in 1951), Rasmussen synthesized his understanding of traditional Chinese architecture and planning in the case of old Beijing, under the title 'The City a Temple' (Rasmussen 1951: 1–9). In *Experiencing Architecture* (first published in Danish in 1957, English in 1959), Rasmussen conceptualized the monumentality of the Imperial City of old Beijing and the picturesque setting of the Imperial Gardens (Rasmussen 1964: 136–9, 145–6). In the Danish version of Lin Yutang's 1962 *Imperial Peking: Seven Centuries of China*, one of Utzon's favourite books, Rasmussen wrote the contradictory introduction on this 'grey' city of modern Beijing in contrast to Lin Yutang's vibrant *Imperial Peking* (Lin 1926: v–viii). Rasmussen's enthusiastic approach to Chinese building culture heavily influenced young Utzon's interest in China, and certainly inspired his trip to China and visit to Beijing in 1958.

Soon after Utzon's graduation from the Academy in 1942, two years after Nazi Germany occupied Denmark, the young students, including Utzon, Tobias Faber and Else Glahn, left to work in Stockholm, then the centre of Chinese archaeology in the West. Several Swedish pioneers of the field during this period need to be mentioned.

Sven Hedin (1865–1952), explorer and cartographer, travelled through Central Asia in 1893–97, 1899–1902 and 1905–08. Hedin later became one of the founders of the Swedish Museum of Ethnography, where the first Japanese tea house, Zui ki tei 瑞輝亭, was inaugurated in 1935.¹⁶ Inspired by Hedin's approaches to China, the geologist, palaeontologist and archaeologist Johan Gunnar Andersson (1874–1960) began his pursuit of Chinese archaeology in the 1920s. Later, an important collection of objects from prehistoric East Asia, discovered by Andersson, became the foundation of Östasiatiska Museet [Swedish Museum of Far Eastern Antiquities], established in 1926. Andersson was appointed the museum's first director. The second director, Bernhard Karlgren (1889–1978), was a sinologist and philologist who contributed much to Swedish scholarship on China. Utzon's lifetime friend, sinologist Else Glahn, was a follower of Karlgren at Stockholm University (1949–57). Osvald Sirén published many articles and books on China, many of which Utzon owned. For many years, Sirén was in charge of the Far Eastern and the Painting and Sculpture Department of The National Museum in Stockholm, which still today houses a fine collection of Chinese paintings. Utzon and Faber visited the above-mentioned three museums, and in an interview, Faber recalled, 'Compared with Sweden, Denmark was more isolated at that time. So, in Stockholm, Utzon and I discovered China together!' Faber also said that soon after the war, Utzon and Faber visited Sirén in Copenhagen, seeking more knowledge about traditional Chinese art and architecture.¹⁷

Significantly, Sirén's early publications on Chinese art and architecture may have provided young Utzon the most sophisticated survey of Chinese art and architecture before his 1958 trip to China. During the 1920s and 30s, Sirén visited China frequently, documenting art with his camera and also purchasing select works of art. In 1924, he issued his first monumental volume, *The Walls and Gates of Peking*, with a highly preservationist, romantic tone in the text juxtaposed with large, lavishly printed photographs and illustrations. Two years later, Sirén published *The Imperial Palaces of Peking* (1926) in both English and French, in a similarly extravagant format. In 1927, Sirén published the article 'T'ch'angnagn au temps des Souei et des T'ang [Chang'an City in the Time of the Sui and Tang Dynasties]' in *Revue des arts asiatiques*, as a result of his study of ancient Chinese city planning. In 1929, Sirén's *A History of Early Chinese Art* was published both in English and French, one of the first scholarly surveys and a summary of his earlier academic writing on traditional Chinese art and architecture. In 1937, Sirén published *Billeder fra Kina [Images of China]* in Danish and Swedish, the sober edition of his early work on Chinese architecture for the general readers in the North. All these books have the format of plates with descriptive text and a short historical narrative. In 1948, confined to Sweden during the Second World War, Sirén wrote and published his first survey in Swedish, *Kina konst under tre Årtusenden [Chinese Art over Three Millennia]*. Utzon studied all these books and essays of Sirén, initially while he was working in Stockholm during the Second World War.¹⁸

Preparing for the Trip

Kay Fisker, Steen Eiler Rasmussen and Osvald Sirén's travels to China and their mentorship significantly inspired Utzon to make his own journey, long before he finally went in 1958.¹⁹ While preparing his competition proposal in 1956 for the Sydney Opera House, Utzon was preparing his study trip to China.²⁰ It appears that, before finishing his proposal, Utzon went to the Chinese Embassy in Copenhagen to apply for a travel visa²¹; China was by then subject to a communist regime and in the midst of the Cold War. Utzon later recalled that the Chinese visa officers were surprised by his application, but they still offered a visa to him because of his enthusiasm for studying Chinese architecture.²² However, the exact dates of the visa application and its effective period are still unknown.

Utzon's winning entry for the Sydney Opera House competition in 1957 may have been the key factor in realizing his only trip to China, for three reasons. First, the outcome of the competition made it possible for Utzon to have a travel companion, the Norwegian architect Geir Grung, his close friend, who bet his travel cost to accompany Utzon on the successful outcome of the Sydney Opera House competition.²³ Second, it appears that, after his first visit to Australia in 1957, on his trip back to Denmark, Utzon traveled to Japan and met Else Glahn. Utzon's days in Japan and his encounter with Glahn confirmed his resolve to travel to China at the end of his second trip to Australia, in which 'China was one more stop next to Japan'.²⁴ Third, the job security, as well as the prize money of the competition (5,000 pounds) and design fee (10,000 pounds) for the Sydney Opera House paid by the NSW government in early 1958 may have given Utzon sufficient time and money to travel and stay in China for almost two months.²⁵

Utzon's Travel Itinerary

In March 1958, Utzon arrived in Sydney for his second visit and presented his design proposal, the *Sydney National Opera House (Red Book)*. This book included details formulated according to a revised building program to the state government of New South Wales, Australia. Later, during April and May 1958, on his way back to Denmark, Utzon went to China, entering via Hong Kong.

Apparently, when Utzon arrived at the border of China with his now expired visa, he strategically lied to the Chinese officials that 'he was the architect of the Sydney Opera House and personally invited by Mao'.²⁶ He then successfully entered China with a new visa and flew to Beijing. However, as Utzon's family recalled, the Chinese government had already decided to send a local tour guide to 'guard' Utzon within limited tourist locations, so Utzon rebelled and refused to leave the airplane in Beijing.²⁷ In the end, it seems that the local authorities let Utzon organize his own itinerary in China without the former restrictions.

According to an interview with Utzon's family and with the wife of Geir Grung, the first 'mission' for Utzon in Beijing was to rescue Geir Grung from a Chinese prison.

Grung had gone to China separately by train to Mongolia through Russia and then by airplane to China, planning to meet Utzon in Beijing. However, at the Beijing airport Chinese government officials found him hiding in a cargo plane trying to enter China, and misidentified him as a 'spy'. Fortunately, after a few weeks of being in jail, Grung was rescued by the Norwegian Embassy and Utzon. Finally, according to the surviving 16 mm films taken by Utzon, the two architects could begin their tour of China in Beijing, where they enjoyed the famous dish of Peking duck, and rode in a *jinriksha*, a two-wheeled carriage pulled along by a person (**Fig. 3**).

According to Utzon and Grung's photographs, negatives and slides, in Beijing, they visited traditional city streets, the gate towers of the city walls, the Palace Museum (the Purple Forbidden City located in the centre of Beijing), the former Imperial Gardens located to the northwest of the Forbidden City (now, Beihai Park), the Altar of Heaven (now, Tiantan Park), the Summer Palace and many old courtyard houses, temples and pavilions, including Luzu Temple, Bai Ta (the White Pagoda) and Miaoying Monastery. In the suburbs of Beijing, they visited Biyun Monastery, in the Western Hills, and the Great Wall.

A few days before the first of May, the International Workers' Day, Utzon and Grung visited Tiananmen Square

and the Palace Museum inside the Purple Forbidden City. They visited the Gate of Heavenly Peace in front of the Square and helped the workers stabilize the swinging red lanterns for the May Day Parade with their sketches of additional supports for lanterns.²⁸ According to Utzon's 16 mm film, on the day of the May Day Parade in Tiananmen Square, they were invited to sit in the VIP seats, where the communist government was extravagantly celebrating with the masses. Utzon recorded the parade and its preparation over a half hour just before he finished his film.

Utzon and Grung met Professor Liang Sicheng in Beijing during a conference, and Liang proposed that 'mass, fast, inexpensive, beautiful and good' were the five principles of modern Chinese architecture (Grung 1959: 29–40). After the conference, with Liang's help, they acquired three copies of the 1925 edition of *Yingzao fashi* (**Fig. 4**), and each cost them one hundred RMB (equivalent to fourteen euros today). Two were for Utzon, and the other was for Grung. Before they left Beijing, they travelled north and reached the Gobi Desert border, but were refused permission to enter for 'safety' reasons.

Then they went south to Henan province, where they visited Songyue Monastery in Dengfeng, Songshan (Mount Song). They continued west to Shanxi province and then visited Datong City and the Yungang Grottoes.



Figure 3: Jorn Utzon and Gier Grung enjoy Peking duck and a *jinriksha* ride in Beijing. Stills from Jorn Utzon's 16 mm film. From The Utzon Archives, Aalborg University Library.

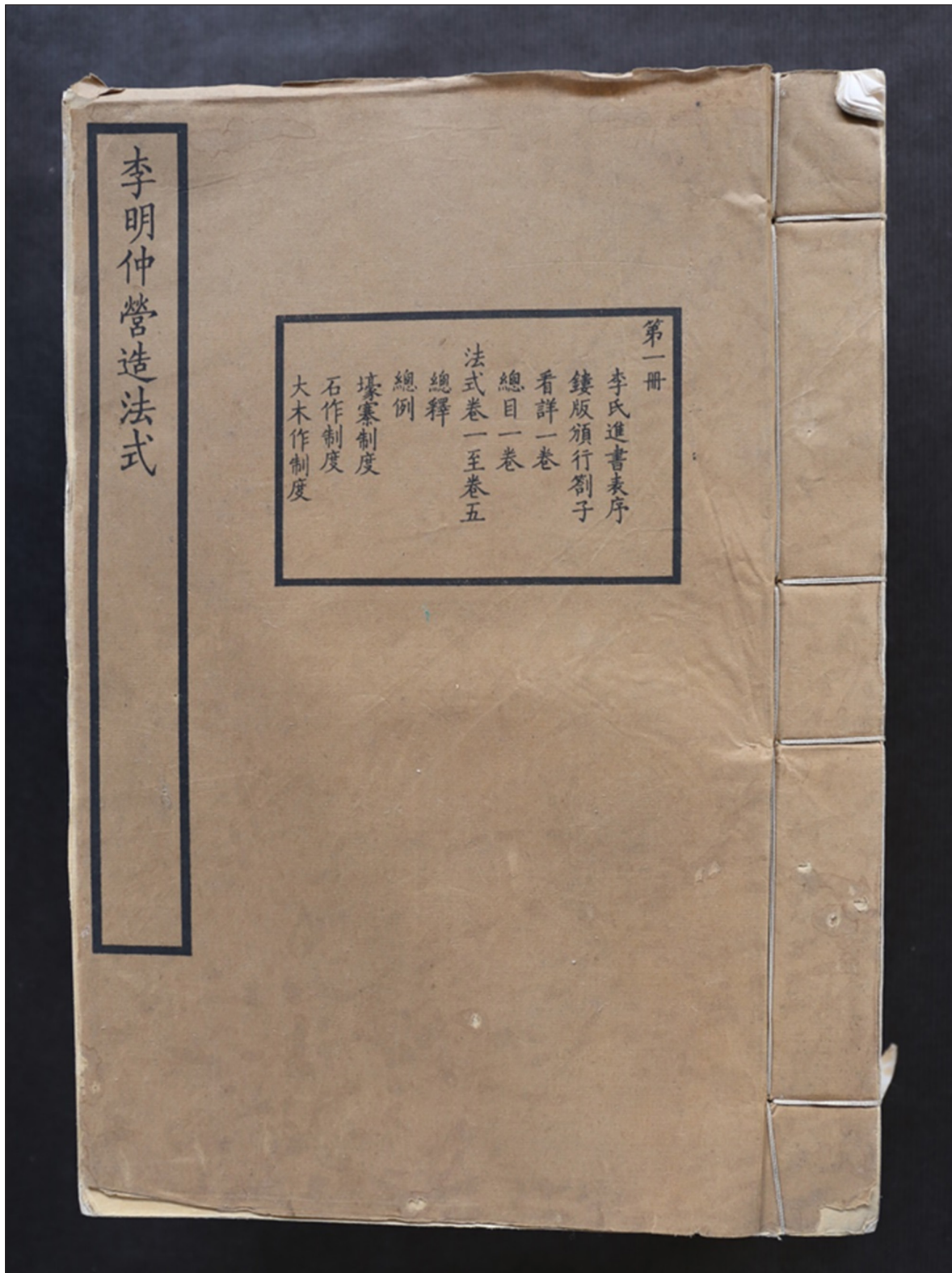


Figure 4: Jorn Utzon's 1925 edition of *Yingzao fashi*, bought in Beijing in 1958. The Utzon Archives, Aalborg University Library.

In Datong, they visited the south city wall and gate, Shanhua Monastery, Huayan Monastery, the Screen of Nine Dragons and the drum tower. On their way to the Yungang Grottoes, they visited the Guanyin Hall and its Screen of Three Dragons.

The Yungang Grottoes served as inspiration for Utzon's creation of the Silkeborg Museum for the Danish artist

Asger Jørn (1914–73) in the 1960s (**Fig. 5**). In his article of 1964, 'Silkeborg kunstmuseum' in *Arkitektur*, Utzon commented,

A building of several stories above the ground would be like a bull in a China shop, and the respect for the existing calm wing of the museum

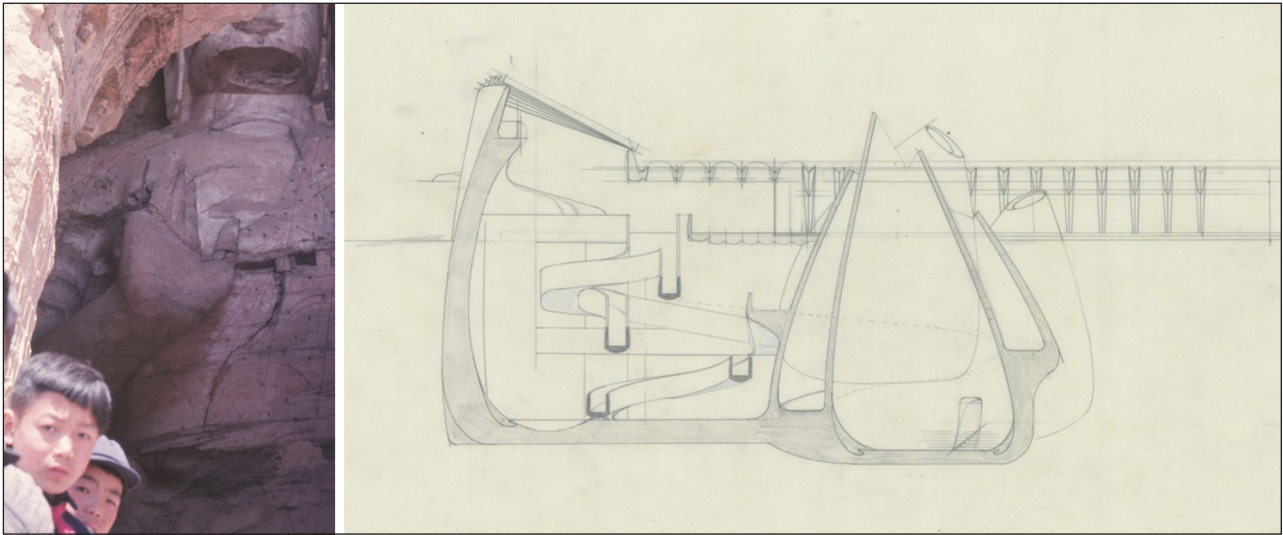


Figure 5: Left: The Yungang Grottoes in Shanxi province, from a slide taken by Utzon in 1958. Right: Utzon's early design proposal for the Silkeborg Museum for Danish artist Asger Jørn (1914–73) in the 1960s. From The Utzon Archives, Aalborg University Library.

calls for a solution that will not dominate the surroundings on account of its sizes.

The inspiration for the design of the museum comes from many different experiences – including my visit to the caves in Tatung [Datong], west of Peking, where hundreds of Buddha sculptures and other figures are carved in caves in the rocks by the bank of a river. These sculptures appear in all shapes in contrast to or in harmony with the surrounding space. The caves are all of varying sizes and shapes and with varying illumination. The old Chinese sculptors have experimented with all possibilities, and the most fantastic thing is a cave that is almost filled with a Buddha figure with a c. 7-metre-high face. These platforms linked by ladders give the visitor the possibility of walking around and coming to close quarters with this gigantic figure. (Utzon 1964: 1)

Later, they visited Xi'an, the capital city of ancient China. In Xi'an, they visited Cien Monastery and the Wild Goose Pagoda. They further entered the center of China and visited Chongqing and Chengdu in Sichuan province. They took a cruise on the Yangtze River to Nanjing. In Nanjing, they met professors Yang Tingbao 楊廷寶 and Tong Jun 童騫.²⁹ As a result of this visit, Yang visited Utzon in Hellebæk in 1959.³⁰

Before leaving Nanjing, they visited the nearby Buddhist monasteries so much admired by Johannes Prip-Møller,³¹ and Chinese gardens in Suzhou and Hangzhou, introduced by *Chinese Houses and Gardens* (1940).³² Later, they visited Guangzhou and other places in southern China, before going back to Hong Kong. When Utzon and Grung arrived at the border, Utzon's visa, granted when he entered China, had expired. This was not the only problem they faced. The Chinese government officially did not allow any private documentation to be exported without reviewing it, such as their 16 mm film and photographic negatives.

So Utzon apologized with two handwritten penitent letters: one for the official process, the other as a 'souvenir' for one particular official due to Utzon's position with the Sydney Opera House.³³ Moreover, Utzon strategically and 'patiently' took a half hour to explain one image to the border officers and pretended he would like to explain all of them in this way. Finally, after a few more photos, the Chinese customs officials allowed them to take everything out without more inspection. After leaving China, Grung went to Japan and continued his study trip while Utzon returned to Denmark.

During their trip to China, Utzon and Grung intentionally went to the middle and western territories of China to visit its historical and cultural heritage, rather than the southern and eastern regions, which had much more modern development (**Fig. 6**). This also suggests that before Utzon's trip to China, he already had a considerable knowledge of China and its architectural culture. To this point, Sirén's *The History of Early Chinese Art: Architecture* can be seen as the foundation for Utzon's planning his trip to China. Utzon visited most of the sites and monuments that Sirén had visited almost thirty years earlier. Utzon's meetings with several important scholars both in Beijing and Nanjing also suggest that he had connections within modern Chinese society. Unfortunately, no documents or records have been found in China to date.³⁴

The *Yingzao fashi* and Chinese Buddhist Monasteries

On Utzon's return to Denmark, a big 'coffin-like' package arrived at Hellebæk.³⁵ This package was sent by Utzon from China and contained his various 'souvenirs'. Among many inexpensive traditional crafts, it included the three sets of the *Yingzao fashi*. The two yellow-covered, colour editions of 1925 were for himself and his eldest son, Jan, who had decided to become an architect. The small, plain, black-and-white 1953 version bought in Hong Kong was sent to Professor H. Ingham Ashworth in Sydney in



Figure 6: Geir Grung's slide of a map of China showing the planned route for his trip. From the collection of Dagny Kjode.

June of 1958 as a personal gift. In his letter to Ashworth, Utzon wrote of his trip to China and the acquisition of the *Yingzao fashi*:

It was a great experience to me to see the old architecture of China, especially in Peking, and it gave me a valuable experience to study the innumerable beautiful staircases and the variation of roof constructions (floating roofs).

I am enclosing a reprint of the 900 year old building 'code' or system and standardization according to which every official building such as temples and castles has been built in the last 900 years.³⁶

During the design process of the Sydney Opera House, Utzon often took the *Yingzao fashi* from his own house in Sydney to the office. He frequently looked at the illustrations to get inspiration for his design and showed it to his staff to clarify his ideas.³⁷ This suggests that the double-spiral patterns for decorative ceilings illustrated in Utzon's *Yingzao fashi* were the inspiration for the geometric principle of the Sydney Opera House's roof (**Fig. 7**). This illustration in the *Yingzao fashi* presented a transformed tectonic latticework of a decorative ceiling representing a stereotomic dome drawn in a two-dimensional format. Within a square outline, the 'dome' was graphically composed by

members of identical curvature in contrary directions, akin to a modern Schwedler dome. This geometric composition directly recalls Utzon's iconic sketch, reproduced on the back cover of his *Sydney Opera House (Yellow Book)* (1962), published to indicate the geometric principle of his Opera House roof forms after nearly four years of study.

The illustration of the decorative ceiling in his edition of the *Yingzao fashi* shows how a spherical complex can be divided into variable fan shaped segments, which can then be further divided into identical, curved and rib-like portions. Moreover, each 'rib' can be divided into a series of small sequential grids. Every grid on the same latitude is identical, and every grid on a different latitude shares the same height. This reveals a standardization and modularization of different groups of units in the whole composition. This may well have contributed to Utzon's ideas of dividing the whole roof structure into a series of representative elements, seen as the geometric principle of roof vault, ribs and arched elements of the Sydney Opera House (**Fig. 8**). The standardization and modularization of building elements in the *Yingzao fashi* were further emphasized by the process of stacking and adding similar bracketing units into varied bracket sets, as documented by the *Yingzao fashi*. Arguably, Utzon's idea of using a series of arched pre-cast concrete units to form the vault roofs of the Sydney Opera House (**Fig. 9**), as well

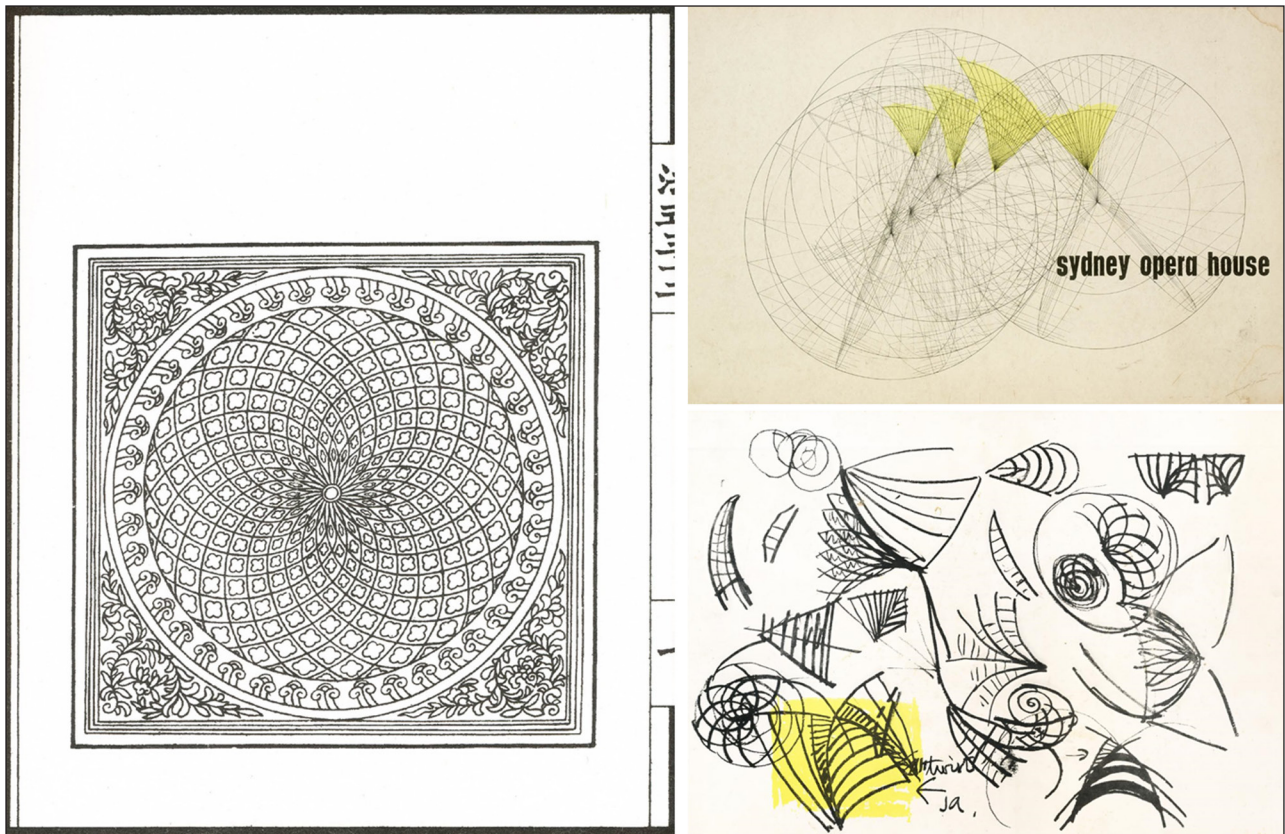


Figure 7: Left: The illustration showing the patterns of small-scale carpentry – a decorative ceiling – in Utzon's *Yingzao fashi*. Right (top to bottom): The front and back covers of Utzon's *Sydney Opera House (Yellow Book)* showing the geometric principle of Utzon's Opera House roof and his studies.

as using a series of plywood-box beams for constructing the acoustic ceilings of the two Main Halls (**Fig. 10**), could have been inspired by the architectonic composition of the bracket set. Finally, the illustrations of decorative coating styles – yellow, red and white – on two bracket sets in Utzon's colour-printed *Yingzao fashi* were carefully studied for his colour scheme of the acoustic ceilings and walls in the Major Hall of his Opera House (**Fig. 11**). In his colour scheme for the Minor Hall, Utzon proposed to use three colours, silver, blue and black within a similar interplay of formulation as the Major Hall. Utzon's conforming and contrasting colour schemes between two Main Halls recalls the similar juxtaposition between bracket sets and inter-bracket-set boards that were mainly painted or coated white, blue and deep blue or black in Utzon's *Yingzao fashi* (**Fig. 12**). The visual effect of the proposed colour composition for the Minor Hall intentionally contrasted with the Major Hall, as Utzon explained:

The theater darker and warm, the concert hall more cold and light plywood [...]. The Major Hall was to be used for Grand Opera and concerts with an optimistic, light colour scheme [...]. The Minor Hall was programmed primarily for theatrical productions, which require a relatively dark or subdued colour scheme for the auditorium. (Utzon 2002: 80)

Besides the roof forms of Utzon's Sydney Opera House, his later northern glass walls of the two Main Halls of

much simplified composition may represent Chinese roof frames built with standardized and modularized elements (**Fig. 13**). Indeed, the cross-sections of buildings in Utzon's *Yingzao fashi* presented standardized joints between varying purlins and rafters, which were constructed each of fragments to compose the whole curvature of a single roof frame. These standardized joints provided the flexibility to allow for the differing inclination of rafters. In Utzon's proposal for the glass walls of the Opera House, each of the mullions with their outward, concave curves separately recall the different roof curvatures shown in the *Yingzao fashi*. When the segments of Utzon's mullions are lower, its inclination is more horizontal; when higher, its inclination is more vertical. Symbolically, Utzon superimposed many systematically arranged *Yingzao fashi* roof outlines into one glass wall. To Utzon, the composition of variable suspended mullions into one glass wall suggested a solution and flexibility between the spherical roof geometry and the rectangular pavement configuration of the Opera House (Utzon 1965: 48–65). Utzon's interplay between these two geometries directly recalls the Chinese roof frame, where the curved roof shape is above and the rectangular stepped-beam system is below. The *Yingzao fashi* may have served not only as an aesthetic inspiration for or confirmation of Utzon's Opera House design but also as his design solution for the varied tasks during design process.

Utzon's 'souvenirs' from China also included two copies of Johannes Prip-Møller's *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*

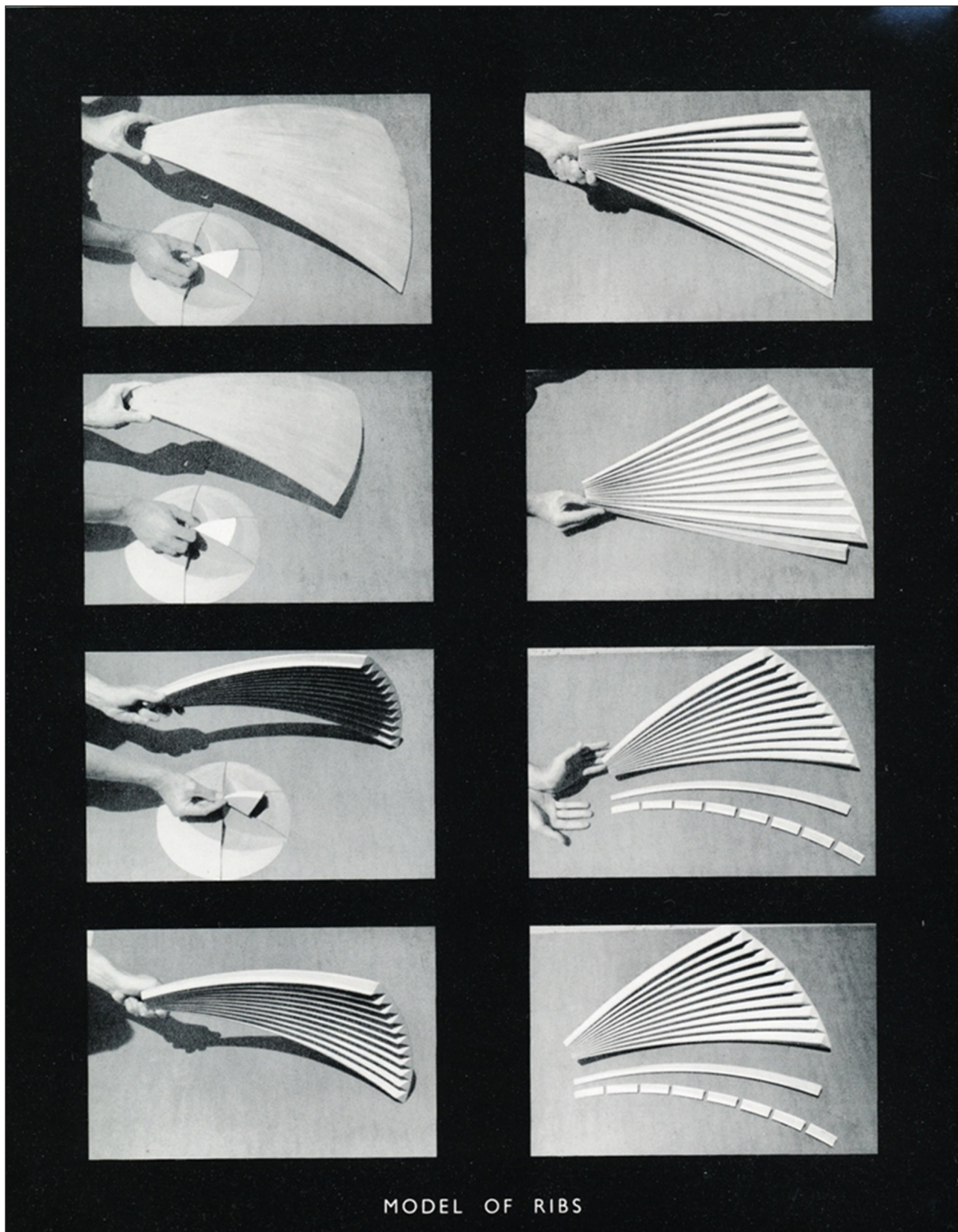


Figure 8: Photographs showing the formation of the geometric principle connecting roof vault, ribs and arched elements of the Sydney Opera House. From Utzon (1965: 58).

(1937), bought in Hong Kong. One was for himself, the other was for his father, Aage Utzon.³⁸ Utzon's own copy contains some of Utzon's notes and conceptual sketches for Bagsværd Church (1968–76) (**Fig. 14**). These notations suggest that the picturesque site of Ch'i Yuan Ssu 祇園寺

(Zhiyuan Monastery) would recall the setting of Utzon's Bagsværd Church: both buildings rise behind a water pond at the main entrance (**Fig. 15**). It appears that Utzon could have been inspired by the principle of Chinese geomancy, documented in Prip-Møller's book, to shape the

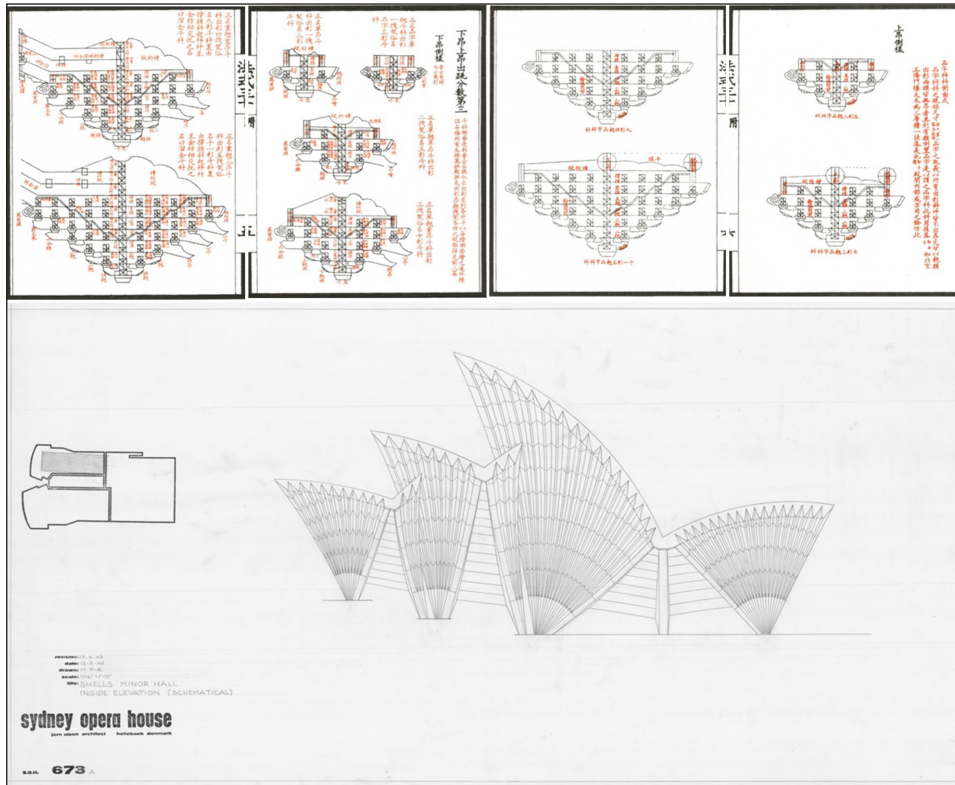


Figure 9: Top: The varied compositions of bracketing sets (the Qing Dynasty revision) below the eaves and platforms in Utzon's *Yingzao fashi*. Bottom: 'Shells – Minor Hall inside elevation (schematical, 1962)', showing Utzon's shell-vault structure constructed by the precast concrete units. Drawing from The Utzon Archives, Aalborg University Library.

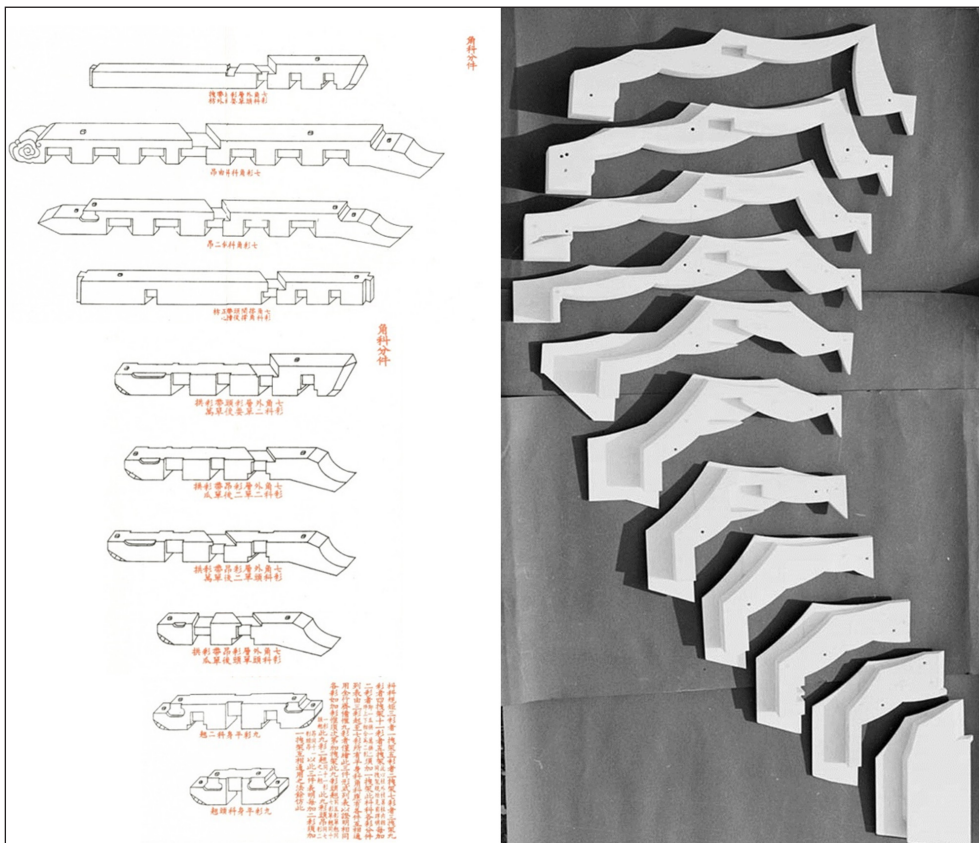


Figure 10: Left: The architectonic composition of the bracket set from Utzon's *Yingzao fashi*. Right: Utzon's wooden models showing his proposed plywood-box beams for constructing the acoustic ceiling of the Minor Hall. Drawing from The Utzon Archives, Aalborg University Library.

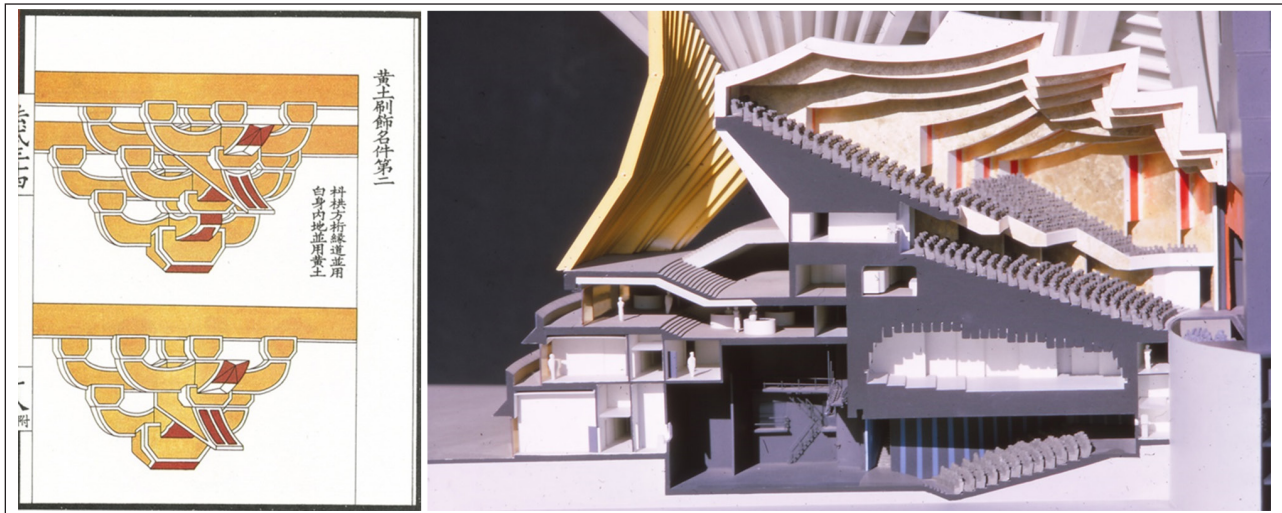


Figure 11: Left: The illustration showing a decorative coating style – yellow, red and white – on two bracketing sets in Utzon's *Yingzao fashi*. Right: Utzon's colour scheme for the acoustic ceiling and wall in the Major Hall of the Opera House. Drawing from The Utzon Archives, Aalborg University Library.

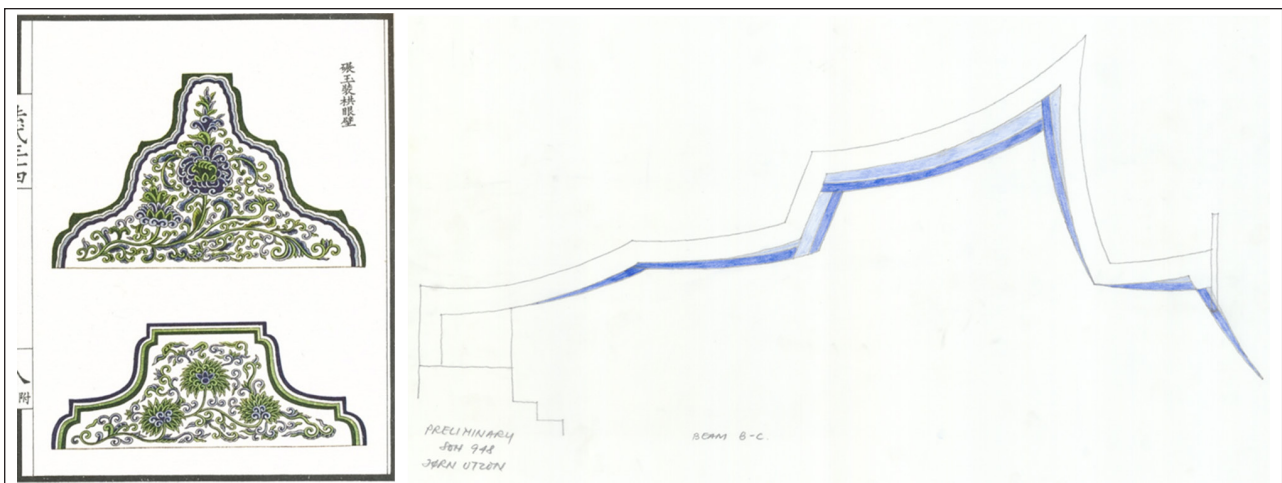


Figure 12: Left: The illustration showing a decorative coating style – green, blue and white – on two inter-bracket-set boards in Utzon's *Yingzao fashi*. Right: Utzon's study of the colour scheme for the interior of Minor Hall in his Sydney Opera House. Drawing from The Utzon Archives, Aalborg University Library.

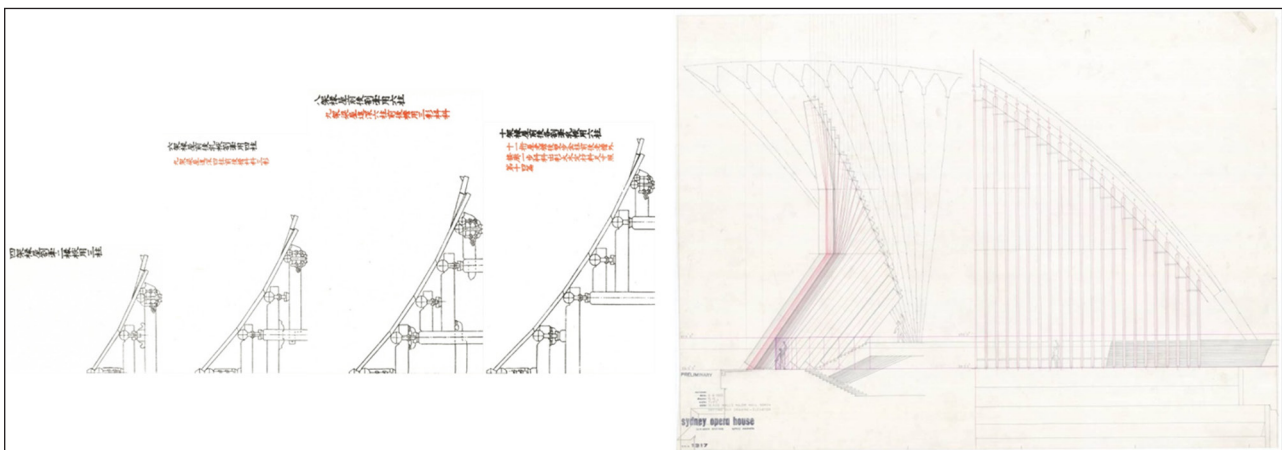


Figure 13: Left: The curvature of Chinese roof frames, from Utzon's *Yingzao fashi*. Right: 'Glass walls Major Hall North' (1965) of the Sydney Opera House, showing Utzon's later developed geometric principle for the northern glass walls of the two Main Halls. Drawing from The Utzon Archives, Aalborg University Library.

site of his church with a more scenic and religious setting, as well as to emphasize the monumentality of his church building. To this point, Utzon further planted the birch trees around the church to reinforce its isolation from its urban surrounding, and thus its sacredness, resonating the mystic phenomenon of Buddhist monasteries presented by Prip-Møller's photographs.

Besides the site analogy, the basic layout of Utzon's church was also similar to Prip-Møller's drawing of Wen Shu Yuan (Wenshu Monastery) in Chengdu, Sichuan province, which Utzon and Grung visited during their trip (Fig. 16) (Fromont 1997: 32). The layout of Wen Shu Yuan echoes the volume Utzon proposed for his walled building and its very limited intervention in the surroundings. The interconnection between main halls and courts on the central axis of Wen Shu Yuan, surrounded by the walls, passages and secondary buildings, seems to inspire Utzon's similar arrangement for Bagsværd Church. In addition to the similar spatial composition, the corridor wall directly in front of Bagsværd Church's main entrance could be interpreted as his 'spirit wall,' much like the protection against evil spirits of a typical Buddhist monastery setting, seen also in Wen Shu Yuan (Prip-Møller 1937: 7). Utzon's proposed hip glass roof and skylight of the church's corridors may be the result of his study of Prip-Møller's photograph

on 'Corridor between Abbot's Quarters and Ko Ching' (Fig. 17) (Prip-Møller 1937: 134). Although it is difficult to list all Utzon's analogies with Chinese Buddhist settings documented in *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*, it is clear that Utzon's Bagsværd Church was his synthesis of Buddhist building culture, which he had closely studied either on site or through Prip-Møller's work.

Yangxin Dian and the Three Large Halls

While Utzon had collected photographs and films from his trip to China, he never published any documentation about it during his lifetime. In contrast, in 1959, Grung wrote about his trip to China in *Byggekunst*, and his photograph of the Yungang Grottoes became the cover of this issue (Grung 1959). But Grung failed to mention his travel companion in this article. It may be that, with Utzon's position as the architect of the Sydney Opera House, Grung was being cautious, sensing the 'dangerous' aspect, in the Western capitalist world during the Cold War, of reports on travel in Red China.³⁹

Utzon's 16 mm films were significant, therefore, not only for proving his 'untold' interest in China during the Cold War but also because they reveal the exact contents and details of his perception of Chinese architecture. Within these films – almost five hours of coverage – are many

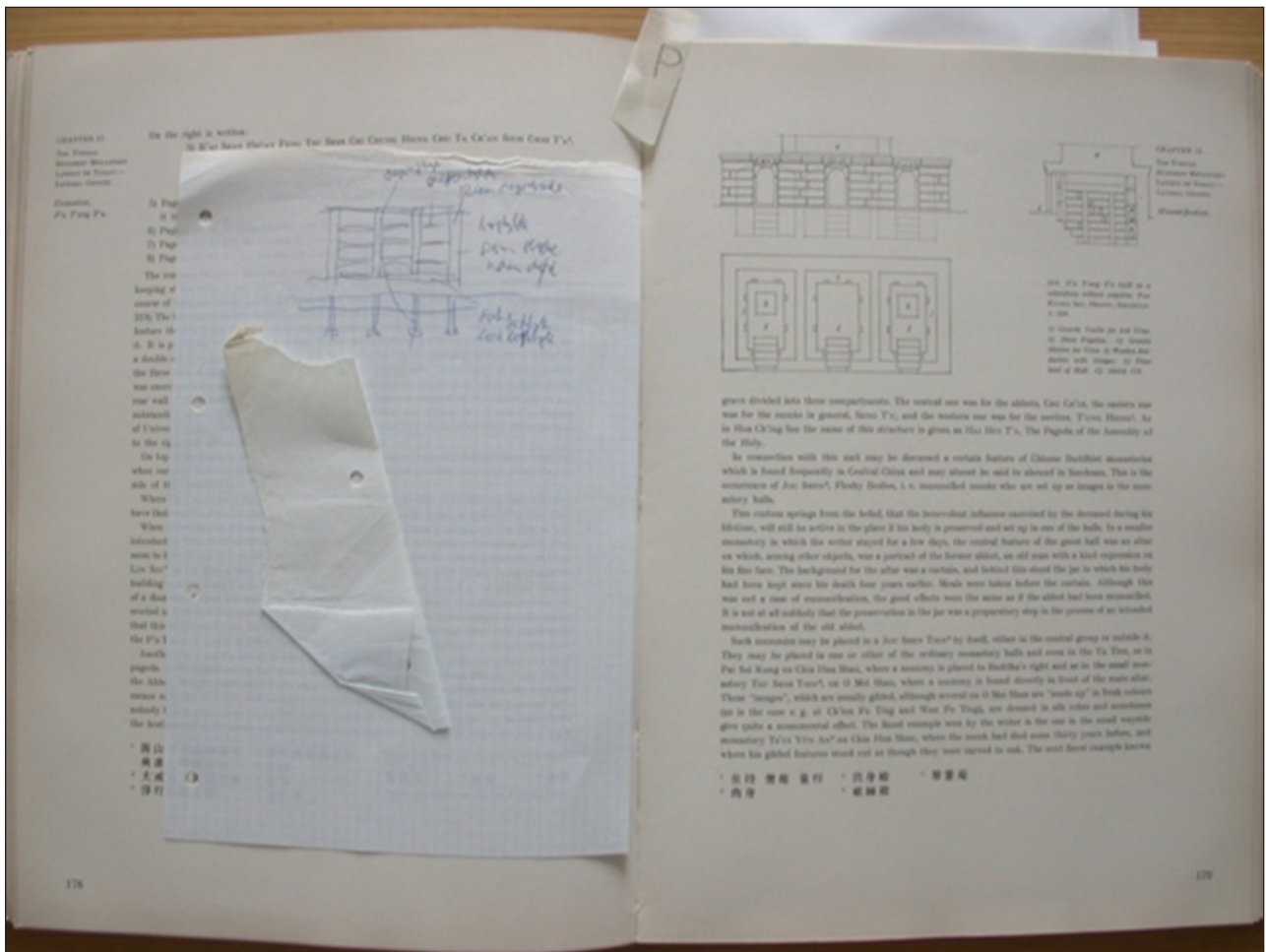


Figure 14: Utzon's copy of *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries* contains many notes and sketches, including sketches for Bagsværd Church. Photo by the author.



Figure 15: Left: 'Anhui [Province]. Chiu Hua Shan [Mount Jiuhua]. Ch'i Yuan Ssu [Zhiyuan Monastery]. Main Gate with Pa Tzu Ch'iang [Patzu River]', from the chapter 'The Typical Buddhist Monastery Layout of Today: — Central Axis', in Utzon's copy of Prip-Moller's *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries* (1937: 5). Right: Utzon's Bagsværd Church. Photo courtesy The Utzon Archives, Aalborg University Library.

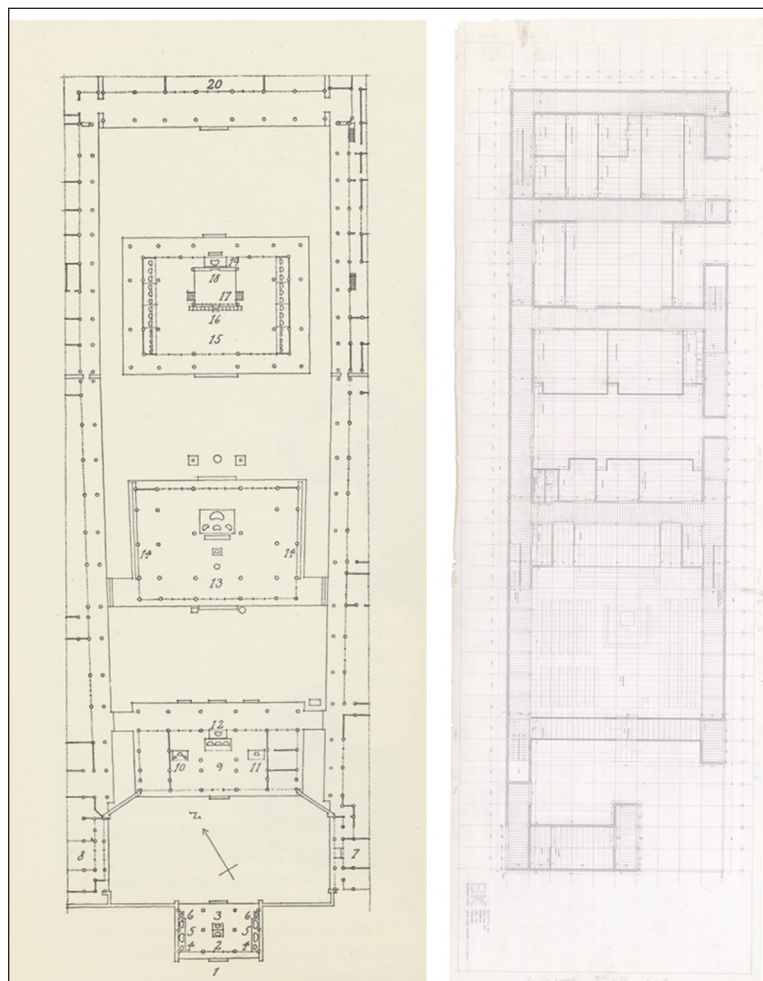


Figure 16: Left: Plan of Wen Shu Monastery, as drawn by Prip-Møller in *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries* (1937: 31). Right: The basic layout of Utzon's Bagsværd Church. From The Utzon Archives, Aalborg University Library.



Figure 17: Left: Prip-Møller's photograph of the interior of Tung Yen Ssu in *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries* (1937: 134). Right: The side corridor of Utzon's Bagsværd Church. Photo by the author.

small sections where Utzon focused on the built forms of monuments in Imperial Beijing, in contrast to other parts where he recorded the people and events in China. Among these monuments, the former Emperor's dwelling palace, Yangxin Dian [Hall for Mental Cultivation] (**Fig. 18**) and the Three Large Halls (**Fig. 19**), which possessed the highest status of all structures in feudal China, were Utzon's key subjects of study.

Utzon appears to have studied the triadic setting of Yangxin Dian and its forecourt when he created a similar layout for his second house in Majorca, Can Feliz (1994) (**Fig. 20**). In both cases, the buildings were built on a podium, and their middle pavilions were finished with an expanded veranda to create a transitional space between indoor and the forecourt. The distinct diagonal passage connecting the entrance at the northeast corner and the forecourt of Can Feliz could have been the result of Utzon's studying the temple master plan of Erwang temple [Temple of Two Kings] and its circulation (**Fig. 21**) during his 1958 trip, a Taoist temple in the sacred site of Mount Qingcheng in Sichuan Province, facing Dujiangyan Dam.⁴⁰ Certainly, Utzon's Can Feliz was his synthesis of Chinese Confucian and Taoist built forms; Erwang temple was initially introduced in Ernst Boerschmann's (1873–1949) *Baukunst und Landschaft in China* (1923) [*Architecture and Landscape in China*] and *Chinesische Architektur* [*Chinese Architecture*] (1925), and

later documented in Chang Chaokang and Werner Blaser's *China: Tao in Architecture* (1987).⁴¹ The above three monographs served as Utzon's reference books for design, and survive in his family collection.⁴²

The hierarchical and south-facing roof/earthwork juxtaposition of Three Large Halls could have been one of the precedents for Utzon's Sydney Opera House (**Fig. 22**), according to the architect's conceptual sketches for the glass wall mullions for his Opera House (**Fig. 23**). Utzon's sketches show composite sections and elevations of Beijing's Three Large Halls, where he is clearly studying their external form, especially the projecting eaves of their roof volumes. Thus, Utzon's combination of shell vaults and multifaceted plywood mullions for the Opera House can be seen as his transformation of the relationship he observed between the roof volumes and projecting eaves of Beijing's Three Large Halls. Moreover, Utzon's restaurant on the podium of his Opera House appears to have been a reflection of the Hall of Central Harmony 中和殿 [the middle hall], while the two main halls separately recall the Hall of Supreme Harmony 太和殿 [the front hall] and the Hall of Preserving Harmony 保和殿 [the back hall].

The Hall of Supreme Harmony could also be the inspiration behind Utzon's Melli Bank (1959–60) (**Fig. 24**). The plan of this bank may be mirroring the 'half' composition of this hall and its specific walls on a raised podium. The hall's 'full' plan could have further served as the geometric



Figure 18: Stills from Utzon's film showing Yangxin Dian [Hall for Mental Cultivation], within the Purple Forbidden City of Beijing. Jorn Utzon's 16 mm film, from The Utzon Archives, Aalborg University Library.



Figure 19: Stills from Utzon's film showing the Three Large Halls, located in the centre of the Purple Forbidden City of Beijing. Jorn Utzon's 16 mm film, The Utzon Archives, Aalborg University Library.



Figure 20: Can Feliz (1994) is built on a podium, its middle pavilion finished with an expanded veranda to create a transitional space between the indoors and the forecourt. Photo courtesy The Utzon Archives, Aalborg University Library.

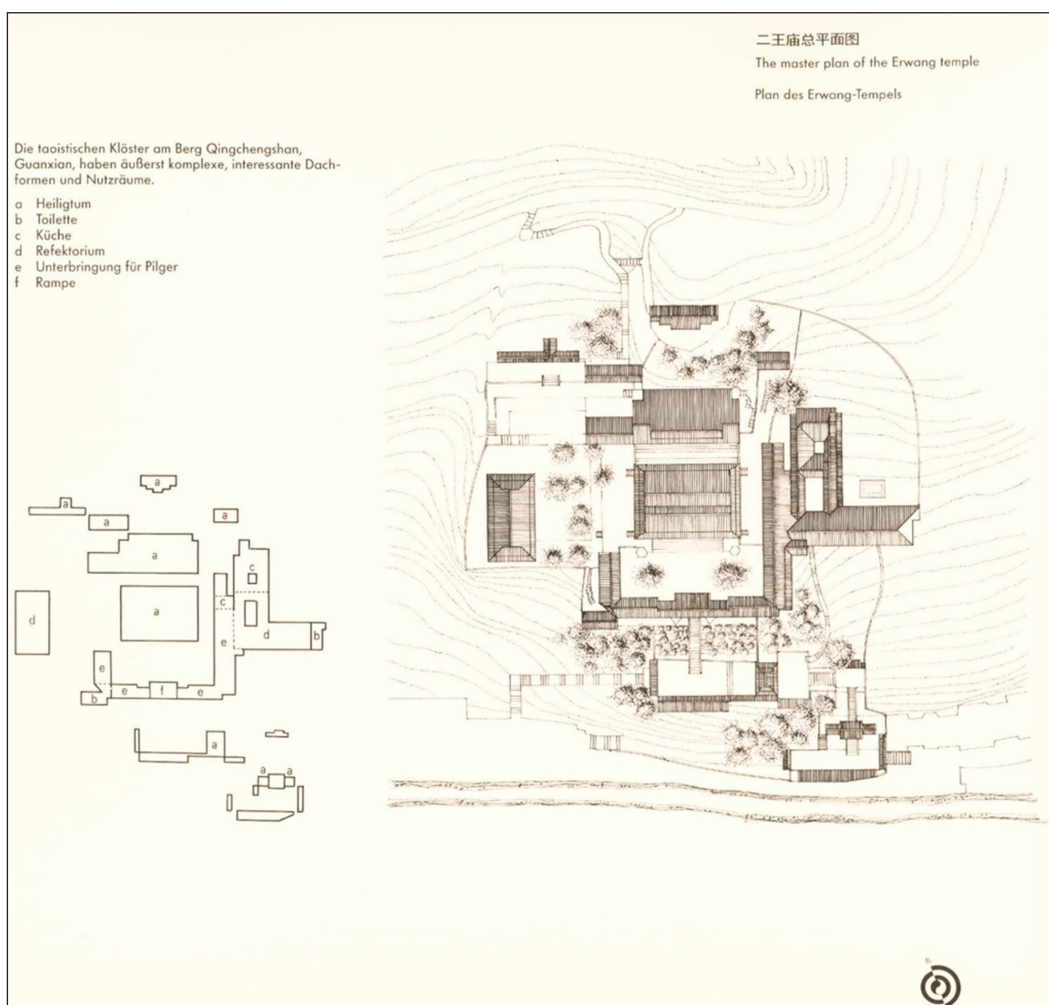


Figure 21: The basic layout of Erwang temple, a Taoist shrine. Kim Utzon suggests it was the inspiration for Utzon's creation of Can Feliz. From Chang and Blaser (1987: 144).

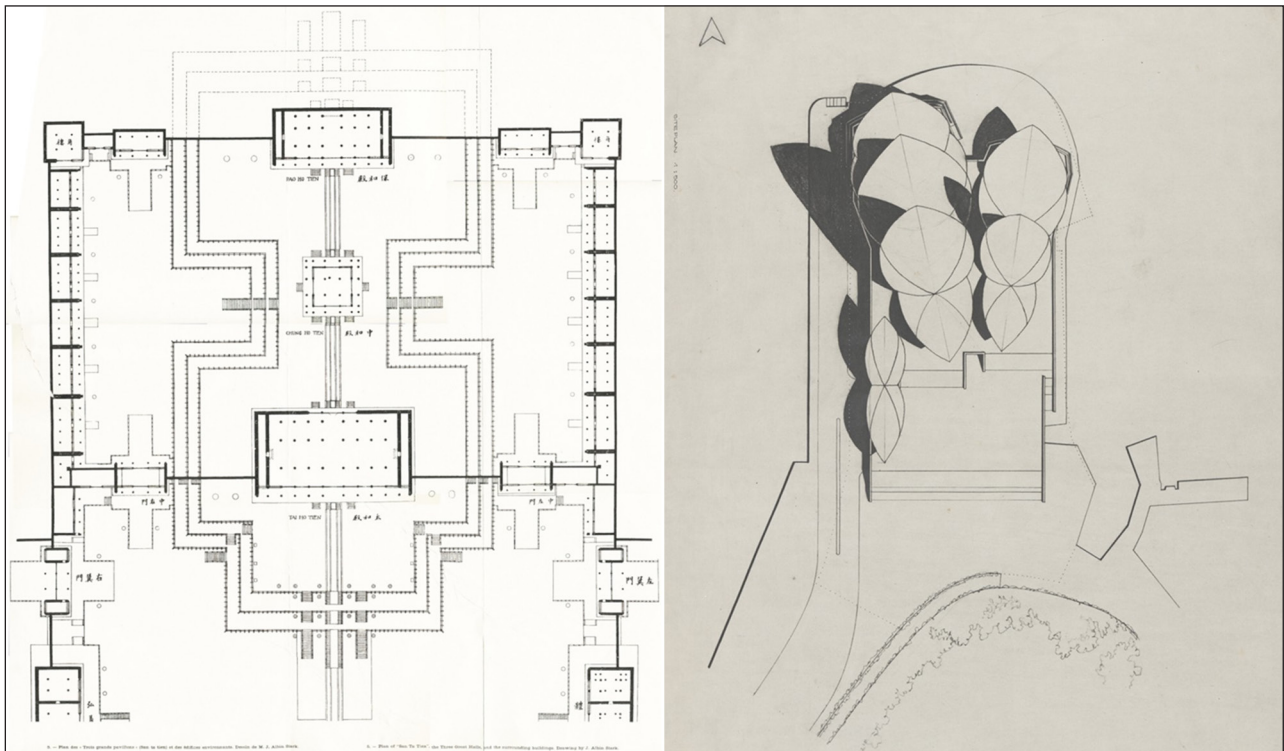


Figure 22: Left: ‘Plan of “San Ta Tien (Sandadian),” the Three Great Halls, and the surrounding buildings. Drawing by Albin Stark’. From Sirén (1926: plate 5). Right: Site plan of the competition proposal for the Sydney Opera House, 1956. From State Records NSW.

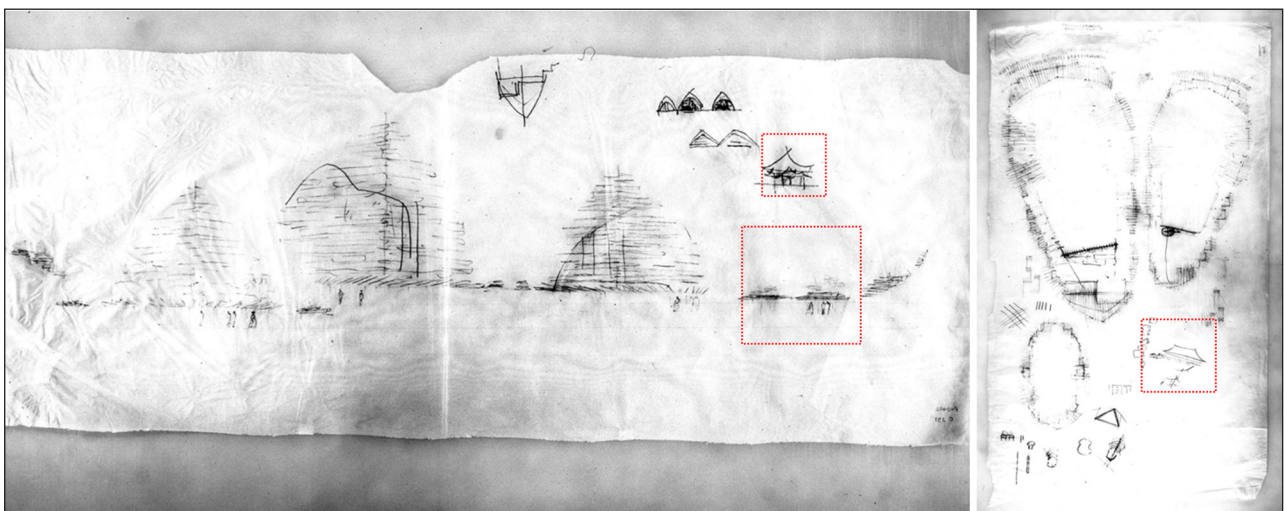


Figure 23: Utzon's conceptual sketches of the Sydney Opera House. Drawings of the Hall of Supreme Harmony; the front hall of the Three Large Halls is marked with a red square. Jørn Utzon, State Library of New South Wales, PXD 492 / 2 - 175 and 179.

principle for the ground floor plan: its staircase and semi-enclosed aisle appear to echo the location of the emperor's throne and the front portico of the Hall of Supreme Harmony.

Utzon's study of the Hall of Supreme Harmony may also be one of the reasons for his conceptual sketch of 'Chinese houses and temples' published in his 'Platforms and Plateaus' manifesto of 1962 (Utzon 1962: 116). In this sketch, Utzon indicates significant characters of a classical Chinese building: the double projecting eaves of a hip or garble roof with supporting bracketing substructure

'floating' above a multi-tier podium (**Fig. 25**). All these features can be seen in the most monumental buildings in the Forbidden City, where these characteristics symbolized the highest status of official building in feudal China. That Utzon paid attention to these built forms further reflects Utzon's pursuit of the expressivity of Imperial monuments in China. The major reason for such attention, and for studying the monumentality of Chinese architecture, may have been that he was in charge of the Sydney Opera House at the time of his trip, and it would have been in the forefront of his mind.

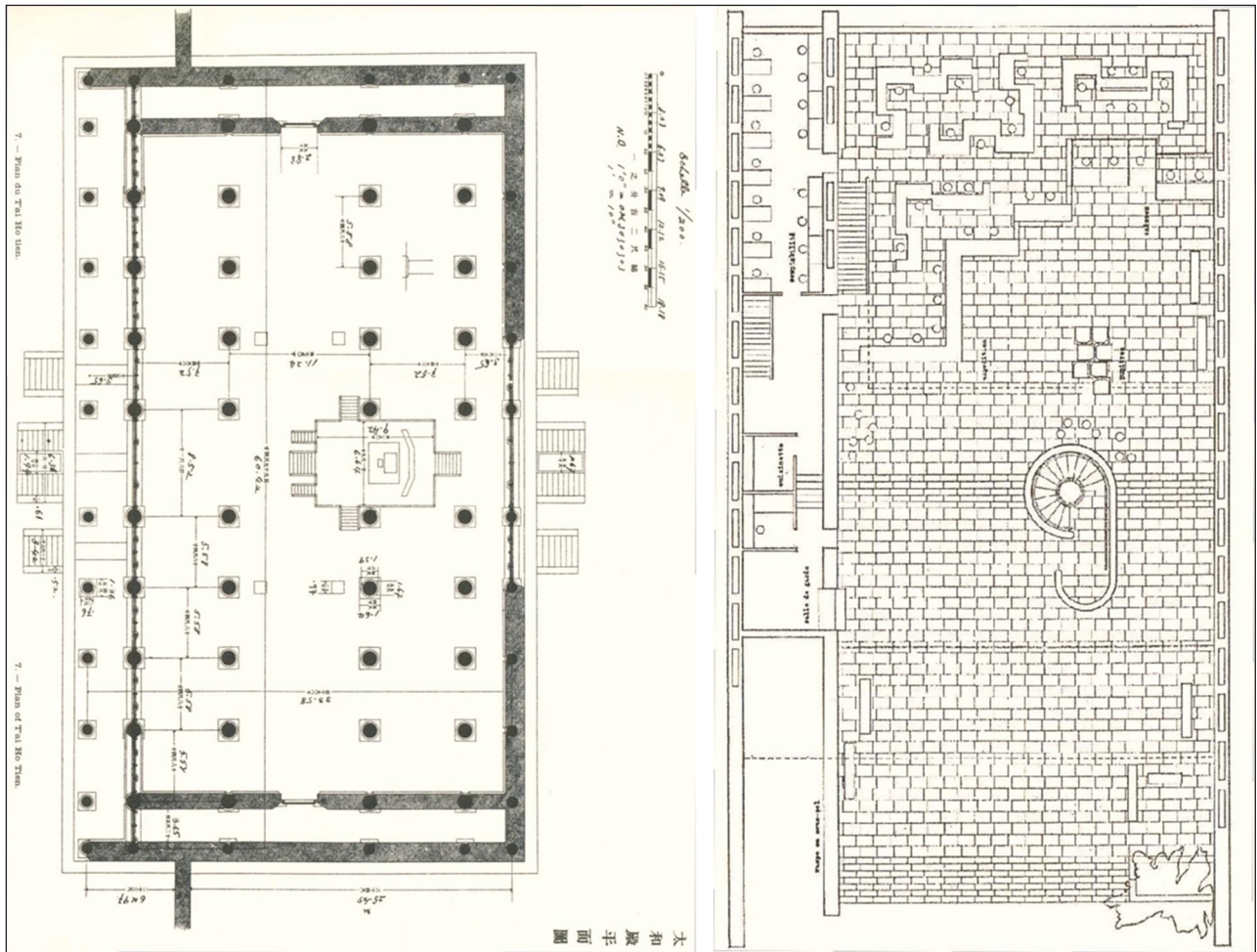


Figure 24: Left: ‘Plan of T’ai Ho Tien (Taihedian) [the Hall of Supreme Harmony]’. From Sirén (1926: plate 7). Right: Utzon’s proposal for the Mellli Bank, Teheran, Iran (1959–60). From The Utzon Archives, Aalborg University Library.

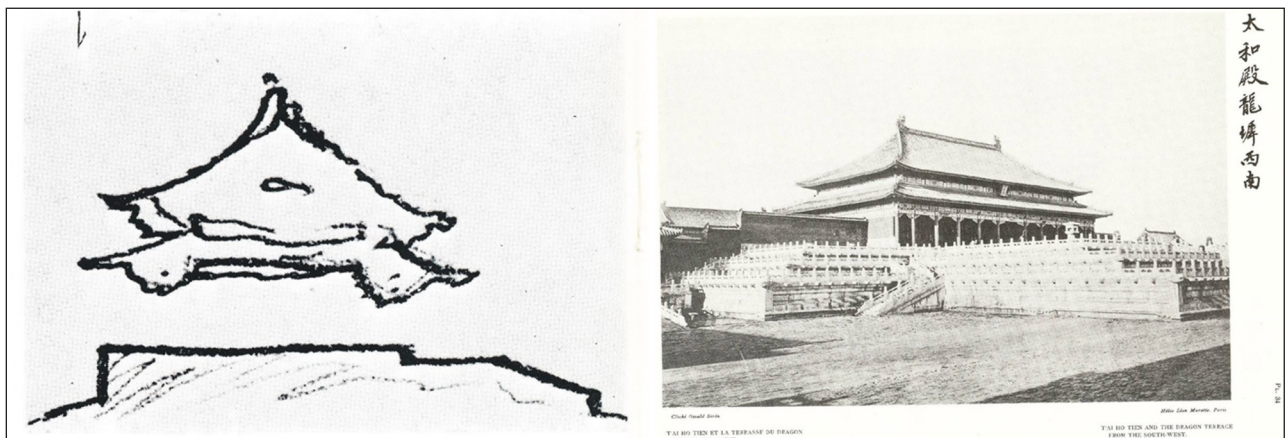


Figure 25: Left: Utzon’s conceptual sketch of traditional, monumental Chinese architecture with fixed podium and floating roof. From Utzon (1962: 116). Right: Taihedian [the Supreme Harmony Hall] and the dragon terrace from the south-west’. From Sirén (1926: plate 34).

Spatial Composition of Chinese architecture

What Utzon’s 16 mm films could not clearly capture was the layout of the former Imperial City of Beijing and the Summer Palace, both of which Utzon experienced during his trip.⁴³ These sites include the Purple Forbidden City, Beihai Park, the Altar of Heaven and so on. Utzon’s experiences of Imperial Beijing and its surroundings may have

played an important role in his design proposal for Kuwait National Assembly design (1972–84).

In Utzon’s early design, the Assembly was conceived as an angular walled city with numerous small courtyards and a central ‘boulevard’ (Fig. 26), a layout that reflects the layout, courts and central axis of the Purple Forbidden City. At the end of Utzon’s central ‘boulevard’ are three

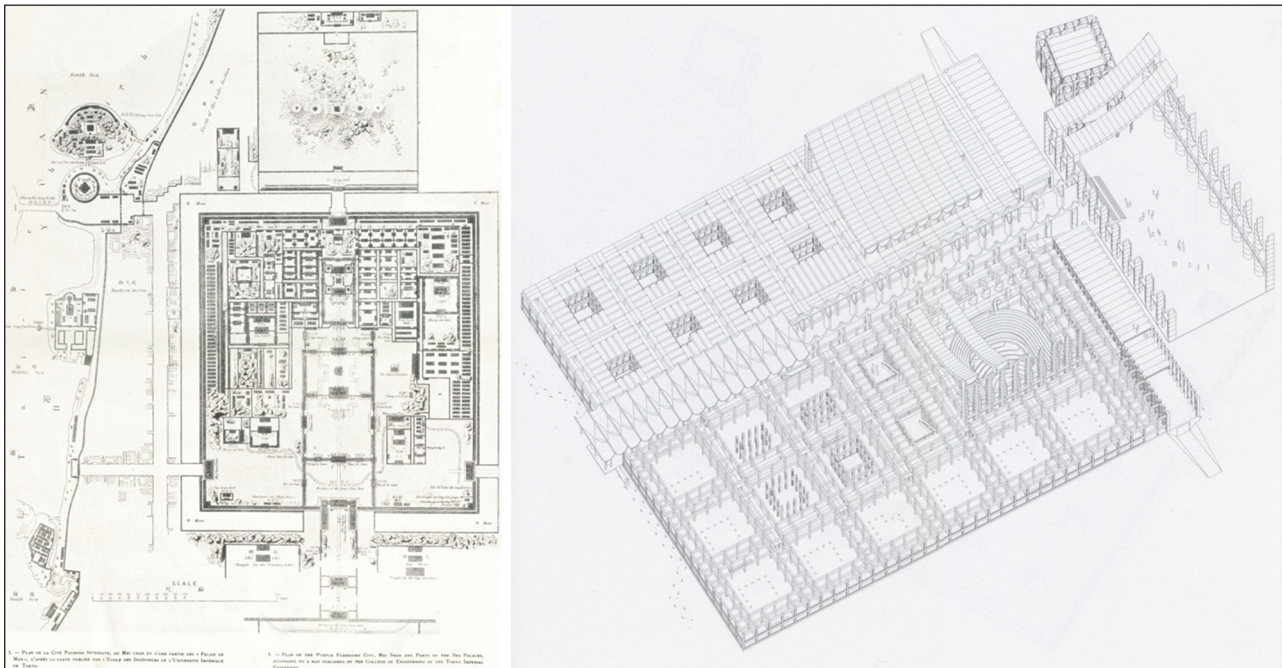


Figure 26: Left: 'Plan of the Purple Forbidden City, Mei Shan and parts of the Sea Palaces, according to a map published by the College of Engineering of the Tokyo Imperial University'. From Sirén (1926: plate 1). Right: Utzon's early proposal for the Kuwait National Assembly (1972–84). From The Utzon Archives, Aalborg University Library.

curved projecting roof forms that recall the facade of the main palaces in Imperial Beijing. These three roofs further symbolically formed another court in this city-like complex. The organic layout of the proposed houses next to Utzon's Assembly, an expanded concept of the Fredensborg Houses (1959–63), could be also his reflection on the shape of the former Imperial gardens located at the West of the Imperial City of Beijing (**Fig. 27**). Moreover, like Imperial Beijing where thousands of palaces and shrines were built strictly according to one proportional and scale system of all building elements, Utzon's proposed 4000 precast concrete units and a series of representative courtyards at Kuwait presented a similar uniformity of built forms and spaces. This could be confirmed by Utzon's study of Else Glahn's modern interpretation of the bracket sets documented in the *Yingzao fashi*.⁴⁴ Indeed, to Utzon, his Kuwait project may be not only his representation of the setting of the Chinese capital but also his re-enactment of its feudal system of architectural practices.

In addition to studying Chinese city complexes, as revealed in the surviving documents, Utzon studied numerous building complexes of Chinese monuments, such as the court of Three Large Halls, Leshou Tang, Shanhua Monastery and so on (**Fig. 28**). Utzon's experiences of these building complexes could be the reason that he created the several seminal works of the 'Platforms and Plateaus' theme, with similar principles of spatial composition. For example, Utzon's proposals for the Opera House in Madrid (1962), the Zurich Theater (1964–70) and the Wolfsburg Theatre (1965) all have a narrow front and a substantial depth, emphasized by enveloping walls above an urban-scale podium (**Fig. 29**). Utzon's theatre layouts also reveal a strong central axis and passage within a series of hierarchical roof and earthwork juxtapositions. This axis/passage connected the site, the main auditorium

and front and back courts and represented a sequential movement of visitors, as well as a transition of spaces from the public domains to private areas. In the two lateral sides of Utzon's central axis/passage were secondary rooms, which reinforce his proposed spatial hierarchy and serve the main halls and central courts. Although none of these proposals was realized, Utzon's architectural maturity and his learning from Chinese building culture, as seen in his 'Platforms and Plateaus' theme, served as a foundation for organizing the spaces and built forms of Bagsværd Church as a typical Chinese monument (**Fig. 16**).

After Utzon's 1958 Trip

After Utzon's forced resignation from his Sydney Opera House position, he received a professorship with the Department of Architecture at the University of Hawaii. In 1973, Utzon made plans to bring his studio students to China for a study trip:

I [Utzon] consider after my own visits to China and my knowledge of Chinese architecture, that it is of as basic value to go to China and study for an architect, as it is to go to Japan and the two architectural cultures are as different as night and day.⁴⁵

Utzon's apparent disregard for socio-political censorship during the Cold War and his enthusiasm for Chinese building culture created 'rumors' in his department. This raised the concerns of its chair, Bruce Etherington.⁴⁶ However, Utzon's study trip with his students was postponed due to the termination of his professorship that same year because of 'economic problems at the university'.⁴⁷

Twenty years after Utzon trip to China, in 1978, Grung received a copy of Roland Rainer's *Die Welt als Garten—China*

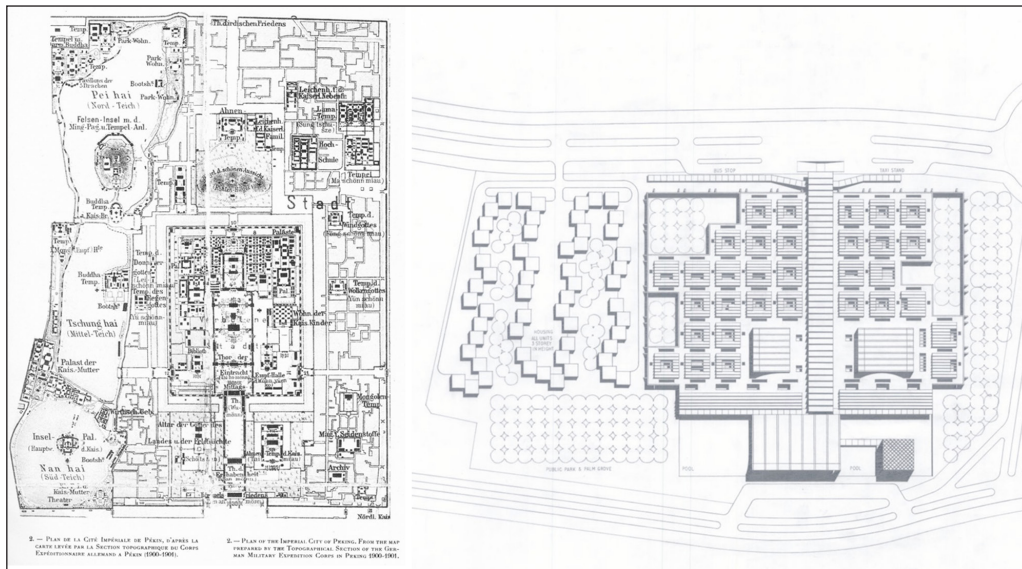


Figure 27: Left: 'Plan of the Imperial City of Peking. City of Peking. From the map prepared by the Topographical Section of the German Military Expedition Corps in Peking 1900–01'. From Sirén (1926: plate 2). Right: Utzon's early proposal for the Kuwait National Assembly (1972–84). From The Utzon Archives, Aalborg University Library.

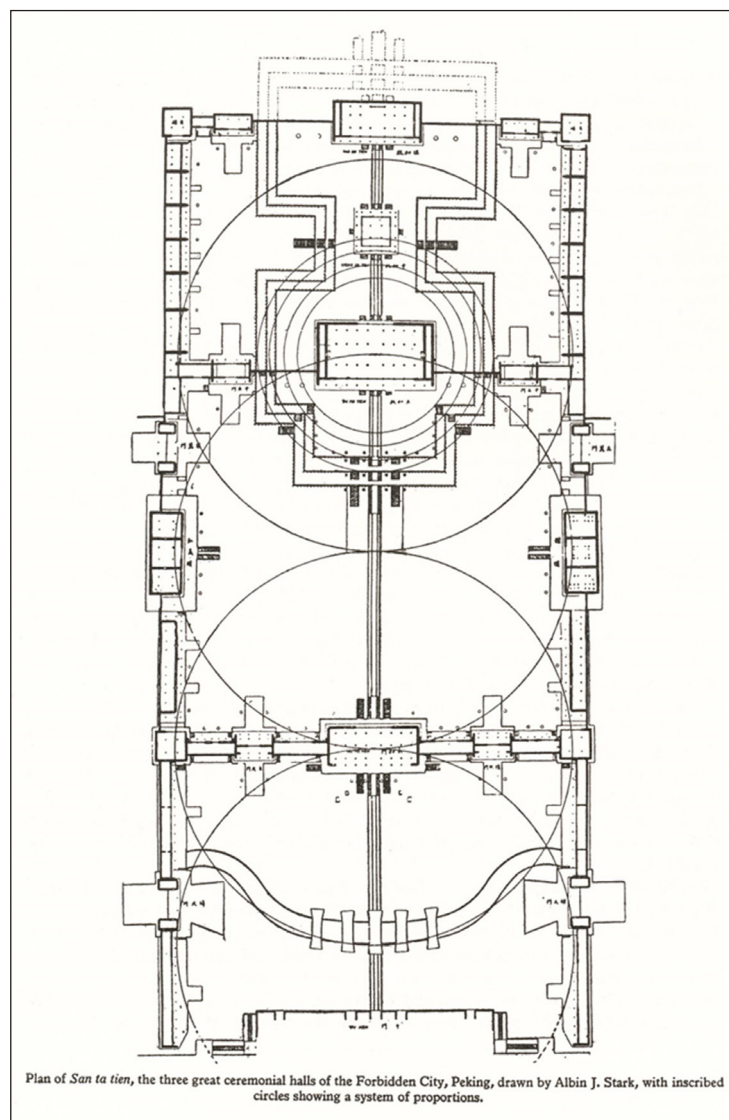


Figure 28: Plan of San Ta tien, the three great ceremonial halls of the Forbidden City.' From Sirén (1929: 15).

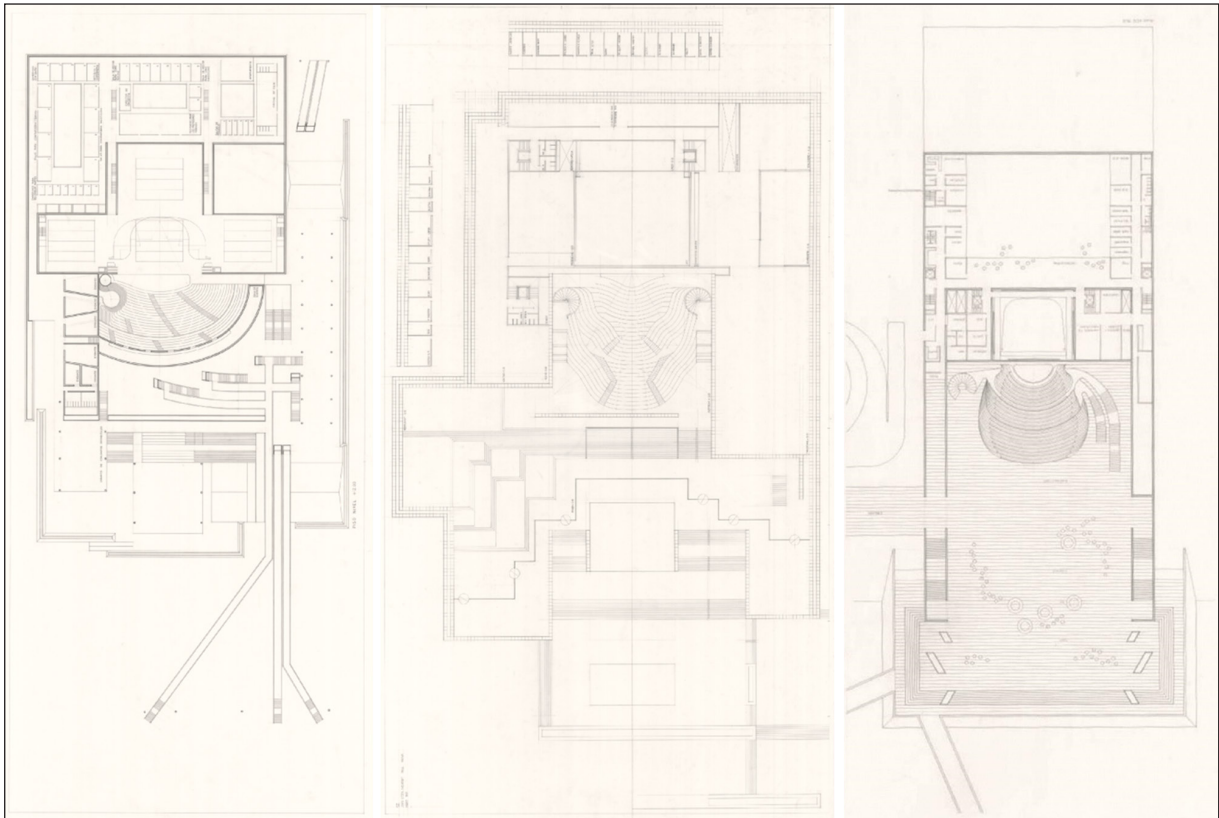


Figure 29: Left to Right: Utzon's proposals for the Opera House in Madrid (1962), Zurich Theater (1964–70) and Wolfsburg Theatre (1965). The layouts show narrow buildings that extend far back, surrounded by walls, and mounted on an urban-scale podium. From The Utzon Archives, Aalborg University Library.

(1976) from Utzon, with his 'down under' signature and 'Chinese' script. Then, two years later, in 1980, Grung visited Utzon at Can Lis, Utzon's own house located on the top of a cliff on Majorca's south coast. In 1989, Grung died from a stroke in Oslo. In the late 1990s, Utzon converted his 16 mm films of their trip to China into VHS format and sent one copy to Grung's second wife, Dagny Kjode, to memorialize his lifetime friendship with Grung.

Although China gradually opened to the West, especially after the late 1970s, Utzon never visited China again, despite his lifetime interest in its architectural culture. However, two of Utzon's close friends, the architectural historians Tobias Faber and Else Glahn, frequently visited China after the Cultural Revolution (1966–76) and published many monographs and articles on that country, both in Danish and English, which Utzon knew. Although 'China was the ultimate travel destination both for Grung and Utzon at that time',⁴⁸ the territory of communist China was no longer as exotic and unreachable as it had been prior to the late 1970s. Utzon had had his own experience of exotic and mysterious China earlier, and there was no desire for Utzon to visit the China of 'others' in his later life.

Conclusion

Previous scholarship on Utzon, such as Peter Myers' 'Une histoire inachevée' (1993) in *L'Architecture d'aujourd'hui*, Françoise Fromonot's 1998 *Jørn Utzon, Architect of the Sydney Opera House* and Richard Weston's 2002 *Utzon: Inspiration, Vision and Architecture*, has noted the importance of Utzon's worldwide study trips for his architectural

career. Utzon, like many of his Nordic colleagues, such as Arne Korsmo (1900–68), Sverre Fehn (1924–2009), Geir Grung (1926–89) and Christian Norberg-Schulz (1926–2000), sought inspiration for his architectural creation from many non-European building cultures. However, none of the above-mentioned scholarly work has provided any detailed account of Utzon's study trips, nor of their impact on the architect's architectural creation. This article, as the first of this kind, reconstructs Utzon's trip to China and examines Utzon's early perceptions of Chinese architecture, both before and during this pivotal adventure.

Indeed, Utzon's early perception of China, especially through studying the work of Aksel Einar Utzon-Frank, Kay Fisker, Steen Eiler Rasmussen, Johannes Prip-Møller and Osvald Sirén, significantly nurtured his lifetime obsession with Chinese building culture. The travels of these people to China may have played an important role in stimulating Utzon's decision to go on a study trip to China himself in 1958, given his apparent ignorance of the political tension between the East and West during the Cold War. His travel itinerary demonstrated a certain amount of pre-existing knowledge of Chinese architecture, as did his connection with leading architects and scholars in China. This seems to reconfirm the comparison Utzon makes, in his drawings, of the Three Large Halls at the Forbidden City of Beijing with his Sydney Opera House. The *Yingzao fashi* acquired during the trip later allowed Utzon to closely study the building practices of Imperial carpentry. This may have inspired him to initiate a series of systems of building elements and

colour codes for designing his Opera House. Another monograph Utzon acquired, *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries*, may have provided Utzon the case study for his Bagsværd Church project. The church and his theatre designs proposed in the 1960s reveal his learning from the spatial composition of Chinese architecture. Can Feliz, Utzon's second house in Majorca, arguably presents analogies of site, built form and spatial composition with Chinese architecture. The design of Utzon's house concludes the architect's lifetime interest in Chinese building culture, to which his 1958 trip to China significantly contributed. The role of China in Utzon's career further raises the question of the impact of other building cultures, such as Japan, South America, India and Middle East, all of which Utzon studied through his worldwide travels. More research is needed to provide a better understanding of the role of Utzon's study trips in the formation of his architectural creations.

Notes

- ¹ Jan Utzon interview, Sydney, 2008.
- ² Many scholars have already alluded, albeit briefly, to Utzon's 1958 study trip to China, but without realising its *crucial* importance. See F Fromonot, *Jørn Utzon, The Sydney Opera House* (Corte Madera, California: Gingko Press, 1998); R Weston, *Utzon: Inspiration, Vision, Architecture* (Hellerup: Edition Blondal, 2002); and J J Ferrer Forés, *Jørn Utzon. Obras y Proyectos. Works and Projects* (Spain: GG, 2006).
- ³ Today, the architectural collection of Utzon has been divided into two separate parts. The first part is The Utzon Archives at Aalborg, Denmark, and the second part is at Jan Utzon's warehouse at Saunte, Denmark. The author surveyed the above two collections, as well as the architectural collection of Geir Grung, located at the house of Dagny Kjøde, wife of the architect, in Oslo.
- ⁴ 'Many Kinds of Things' is the translated title of the 1942 portfolio for Utzon-Frank's collection, 'Mange slags Ting'.
- ⁵ The *Yingzao fashi* is a technical treatise on architecture and craftsmanship written by the Chinese author Li Jie (李诫; 1065–1110), in the mid Song Dynasty (960–1279 AD).
- ⁶ Else Glahn interview, Birkerød, 2009.
- ⁷ In the DVD by Bech (2007), Utzon says, 'My uncle Einar Utzon Frank let me know the East, when I was young.'
- ⁸ Jan Utzon interview, Sydney, 2008.
- ⁹ Marcus had been inspired by Sirén's *Rytm och Form och andra Fragmenter om Kinesisk och Europeisk Målarkonst [Rhythm and Form and other Fragments of Chinese and European Paintings]* of 1917, which was later published in English as *Essentials in Art* (1919).
- ¹⁰ Tobias Faber confirmed, during an interview in Copenhagen in 2009, that Utzon had read Marcus's book.
- ¹¹ Today, the model has been moved to the Danish National Museum.
- ¹² The names of two model makers and the name of Society for Research in Chinese Architecture were written in Chinese on the plaque in the front elevation of model.
- ¹³ See the letter from Liang to Prip-Møller, dated 22 July 1933, Prip-Møller Archives, The National Library, Denmark.
- ¹⁴ Else Glahn interview, Birkerød, 2009.
- ¹⁵ Tobias Faber interview, Copenhagen, 2009.
- ¹⁶ The museum began as the Ethnographic Collections of the Museum of Natural History. In 1966, the Museum of Ethnography became a separate authority. The original Zui ki tei burned down in 1969, and today's model was rebuilt and finished in 1990.
- ¹⁷ Tobias Faber interview, Copenhagen, 2009.
- ¹⁸ Ibid.
- ¹⁹ Ibid.
- ²⁰ Interview with Jan Utzon, Sydney, 2008. This information was also confirmed by Dagny Kjøde, wife of Geir Grung, during an interview at Oslo, 2010.
- ²¹ Ibid.
- ²² Ibid.
- ²³ Dagny Kjøde interview, Oslo, 2010.
- ²⁴ Else Glahn interview, Birkerød, 2009.
- ²⁵ Jan Utzon interview, Sydney, 2008.
- ²⁶ Lin Utzon interview, Hellebæk, 2009.
- ²⁷ Ibid.
- ²⁸ Ibid.
- ²⁹ As an architectural historian, Tong Jun wrote about his understanding of Utzon and the Sydney Opera House: 'After a long struggle, Utzon finally designed his initial scheme for the competition. However, there was now little time for making the drawings, and Utzon almost gave up. Unexpectedly, he won the first prize, at the age of only 37. Then, he used the prize money to travel, around the world and to Nanjing in China [...].' See Ming, T 2000 *The Collective Works of Tong Jun [童寯文集]*, Volume II. Beijing: China Architecture & Building Press. pp. 129–130. Later in 1979, Tong Jun commented on Utzon and the Opera House in his 'The Century of Western Modern Architectural History': '[...] In the building program of the Opera House, Utzon was much occupied with difficulties arising from consistently revised proposals for the construction of the shell roofs. There is almost no other case in modern architectural history that can be compared with Utzon's long-term struggle with this problem. Indeed, Utzon demonstrated both his creativity and determination with his ultimate design solution [...].' See, Ming, T 2001 *The Collective Works of Tong Jun [童寯文集]*, Volume I. Beijing: China Architecture & Building Press. 308.
- ³⁰ Tobias Faber interview, Copenhagen, 2009.
- ³¹ These could include Hui Chu Ssu 慧居寺 (Huiju Monastery) and Lin Ku Ssu 靈谷寺 (Lingu Monastery). The former was studied in great details in Prip-Møller's *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries* (1937). The later was published in Prip-Møller's 1934 *The Hall of Lin Ku Ssu, Nanking, Artes. Monuments et Mémoires III*. Copenhagen: P. Haase & fils.
- ³² Professor Tong Jun is one of the contributors to this book which introduced several gardens in Shanghai, Hangzhou and Suzhou.
- ³³ Lin Utzon interview, Hellebæk, 2009.

³⁴ The author met the family members and friends of Professors Liang Sicheng, Yang Tingbao and Tong Jun, but no of them knew Utzon, his trip to China and his Chinese connection.

³⁵ Jan Utzon interview, Sydney, 2008.

³⁶ Letter from Utzon to Ashworth, dated 12 June 1958, (Ashworth Papers, Box 1, Folder 9), National Library, Canberra.

³⁷ Peter Myers and Richard Lepastrier interview, New Castle, 2009. Later, after a request from Lin, his daughter, Utzon gave her the seventh volume on decorative painting from his yellow cover eight-volume set. Since Utzon passed away in 2008, the Utzon family decided to let Jan Utzon own the two sets of his father's *Yingzao fashi*.

³⁸ After Aage Utzon passed away in 1970, this copy was given to Jan Utzon. Later, the copy originally owned by Utzon himself was given to Kim Utzon.

³⁹ Dagny Kjode interview, Oslo, 2010.

⁴⁰ Kim Utzon interview, Copenhagen, 2010.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Before and after his trip, Utzon studied Osvald Sirén, Ernst Boerschmann and many others' publications on the layout of former Imperial City of Beijing and the Summer Palaces.

⁴⁴ Utzon's study of Chinese bracketing units with the modern perspective drawing made by the Chinese student of Else Glahn, published in 2008 *Jørn Utzon: Logbook, VOL. IV Prefab, Kuwait National Assembly*. Hellerup: Edition Bløndal. 4–5 and 166–7.

⁴⁵ See Jørn Utzon's letter to Bruce Etherington, dated October 3, 1973, in *The Utzon Archives*, Aalborg University Library.

⁴⁶ See Bruce Etherington's letter to Jørn Utzon, dated September 21, 1973, in *The Utzon Archives*, Aalborg University Library.

⁴⁷ See Jørn Utzon's letter to Bruce Etherington, dated October 3, 1973, in *The Utzon Archives*, Aalborg University Library.

⁴⁸ Dagny Kjode interview, Oslo, 2010.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to express his deepest gratitude to Professor Philip Goad and Peter Myers for their moral support during his PhD study (2007–2011) at the University of Melbourne, which resulted in a dissertation entitled 'Utzon's China, The Reinterpretation of Traditional Chinese Art and Architecture in the Work of Jørn Utzon (1918–2008)'.

Competing Interests

The author declares that they have no competing interests.

Author Biography

Dr. Chiu Chen-Yu graduated from Chung Yuan Christian University, Taiwan, in 2002 with a Bachelor of Architecture. He pursued a master's degree in Urban Design at

Columbia University in New York in 2005 and received his PhD at the Faculty of Architecture, Building and Planning, the University of Melbourne, in 2011. Since 2013, he worked as a post-doctoral researcher at the Department of Architecture, Aalto University. His primary research interest is in the mechanism of East-West intercultural dynamics within the field of modern architecture.

References

Bech, P 2007 *Jørn Utzon: The Architect's Universe* (DVD). Copenhagen: Louisiana Museum for Modern Art.

Chang, C and **Blaser, W** 1987 *China: Tao in Architecture*. Basel: Birkhauser Verlag.

Drew, P 1999 *The Masterpiece, Jørn Utzon: A Secret Life*. South Yarra: Hardie Grant Books.

Faber, T 1994 *Johannes Prip-Møller, A Danish Architect in China*. Hong Kong: Tao-Fong-Shan Christian Center.

Faber, T 1995 Kay Fisker, *Kay Fisker*. København: Arkitektens Forlag.

Faber, T and **Utzon, J** 1947 Tendenser i Nutidens Arkitektur [Tendencies in present-day Architecture]. *Arkitekten*, 7(9): 63–69.

Fromonot, F 1997 Jørn Utzon. *Casabella*, 10(97): 24–37.

Grung, G 1959 Reise, folkeliv og gammel arkitektur i Kina. *Byggekunst*, 2: 29–39.

Lin, Y 1926 Kejserens Peking, Kina gennem syv arhundreder. København: G.E.C.GAD.

Marcus, A 1941 *Den Blaa Drage*. København: Gyldendalske Boghandel.

Prip-Møller, J 1937 *Chinese Buddhist Monasteries, Their Plan and its Function as a Setting for Buddhist Monastic Life*. Copenhagen and London: G.E.C. Gads Forlag and Oxford University Press.

Prip-Møller, J 1937 En Model af typisk nordkinesisk Tempelha. *Arkitekten Maanedshæfte*: 65–68.

Rasmussen, S E 1951 *Towns and Buildings: Described in Drawings and Words*. Liverpool: The University Press of Liverpool.

Rasmussen, S E 1964 *Experiencing Architecture*. London: Chapman & Hall.

Rasmussen, S E 1967 *London: The Unique City*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The M.I.T. Press.

Rindholt, S 1942 *Mange slags Ting: et Udvalg af Billeder fra Einar Utzon Franks Samling*. København: Arkæologi, Kunst, Kunsthåndværk, Etnografi.

Sirén, O 1926 *The Imperial Palaces of Peking*. Paris and Brussels: Librairie Nationale d'Art et d'Histoire.

Utzon, J 1962 Platforms and Plateaus: Ideas of a Danish Architect. *Zodiac*, 10: 113–140.

Utzon, J 1964 Silkeborg kunstmuseum. *Arkitektur*, 1: 1–5.

Utzon, J 1965 The Sydney Opera House. *Zodiac*, 14: 48–49.

Utzon, J 1970 Additiv arkitektur [Additive architecture]. *Arkitektur*: 1–48.

Utzon, J 2002 *Sydney Opera House: Utzon Design Principles*. Sydney: The Sydney Opera House Trust.

Weston, R 2002 *Utzon – Inspiration, Vision, Architecture*. Hellerup: Edition Bløndal.

How to cite this article: Chiu, C-Y 2016 China Receives Utzon: The Role of Jørn Utzon's 1958 Study Trip to China in His Architectural Maturity. *Architectural Histories*, 4(1): 12, pp. 1–25, DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.5334/ah.182>

Published: 29 July 2016

Copyright: © 2016 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.

]u[*Architectural Histories* is a peer-reviewed open access journal published by Ubiquity Press.

OPEN ACCESS 