

have less. For each door, I ask you to pay attention to the feeling which the door *creates* in you.

The judgments one can make about the feeling created by these doors in the wall are necessarily incomplete, since the degree of feeling of each one — if it were a real door — would depend on more information about the context and character of the building in which the door is to be placed. Nevertheless, we can see different degrees of feeling in each door, even in these rudimentary sketches.

The door A will have relatively little feeling, no matter where it is placed. C, too, though it looks like a door that is supposed to have feeling, actually has very little. B has a lot, perhaps the most of the eight doors on the page, though of course it would only make sense in a certain kind of context. D, though similar, has rather less. E is strange looking; but in the right context (a

brightly colored earth building for instance), it could have the potential for a great deal of feeling. H is a little strange: It does not have much feeling in this context, and it does not preserve or extend the latent structure that is there. F might only work in very special circumstances, a warehouse or industrial building perhaps, to account for the width of the doorway. G has some feeling: In a simple block building, with flowers round the door, it might have a great deal of simple substance.

I hope it is visible that the ones which have most feeling are also the ones which (probably) best preserve and extend the deepest latent structure in our imaginary wall, and are the ones which will do the best job of creating and increasing life in this wall. Of course, in a real case, it would depend enormously on the character of the wall itself. But, still, you get the idea.⁴



6 / THE BLACK COLUMNS

Now for a larger-scale example. Let us explore the idea of emotional substance further, through an example from a large auditorium. In 1984 I went to Japan to work out the colors of the inside of the Great Hall in the Eishin school. Getting these colors right was one of the most exhausting things I have ever done.

While I was designing the hall I always had two impressions. First, that it should be very dark inside, a feeling of darkness. That quality is already present in the early cardboard model shown on page 239; and, as a feeling, was present in me from the very beginning of my thought about this building. Second, that in the darkness, colors were somehow glowing. I imagined bright colors, even reds, yellows, blues — on the columns and capitals — but darkly glowing in the darkness — never bright. This was my starting point.

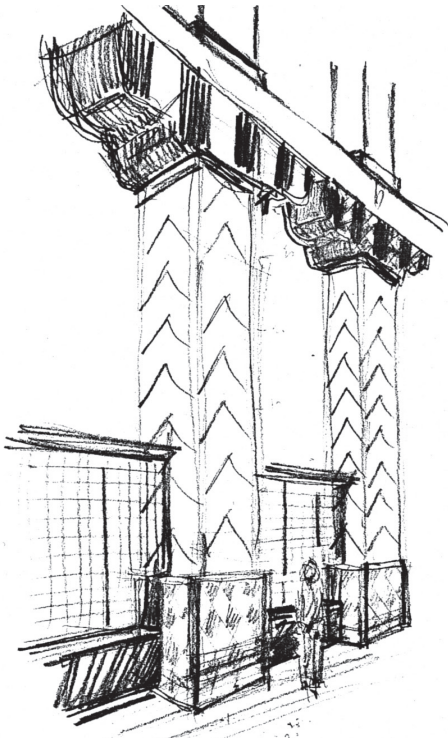
When I went to Japan in February 1985 the building shell was finished. All the columns,

capitals, beams, walls, windows were there. And the darkness was there. So I stood for days, in the dark hall, trying to imagine concretely what colors would create the proper feeling.

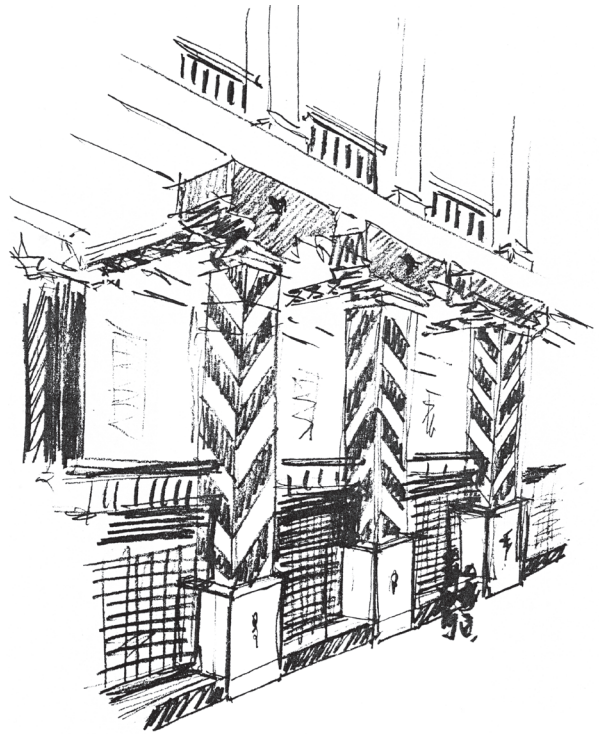
It was hard work. Nothing obvious came. Most of the first colors seemed wrong. Then, after several days, I spent almost half a day sitting in the bath — my eyes closed — simply trying to see the inside of the hall. I sat for hours and hours. Finally, after many hours, I began to see the inside of the hall and its columns as black. This was startling and unexpected — not something that had ever occurred to me. But it had the marks of an authentic vision. And on the surface of the black, something faintly glowing.

I made a first sketch, very hastily.

The vision maintained itself. The chevrons on the column, which had been in my mind ever since some earlier sketches — now seemed darkly red. By chance, since I made the sketch



My original sketch of the columns



A slightly later sketch

hastily, in the train, on the way to the site, the drawing was done in ball point which left faint bluish lines, even after I had painted the red and the black. The faint bluish aura was important, and essential to the way the color glowed.

Back at the site, I now began full-scale mockups in the building, painting huge pieces of paper, and covering the real columns. It was very hard to get the right colors. The black, as I found necessary to make it work, was actually a dark, dark, reddish gray — not dead black, which was too harsh.⁵ The red, too, was hard to get. At first simple reds had a terrible bright decorator-like quality, completely different from the feeling I saw in my mind. Finally, I began mixing a series of reds which had an unusual amount of black in them; so much, that I myself could not believe that they would seem red. And yet, on the column, it was these blackish reds which glowed in the right way, when the chevrons were made of them. There was so much black that I couldn't even persuade my assistants

to mix them correctly — they kept making them too red, not black enough.

The size of the blossom on the capital was also crucial to the color.

Then the faint bluish haze. First I tried very fine blue lines, between the red and black. It was hopeless, and only trivialized the red, made it seem pink. Then, I tried putting blue — actually white with a faint bluish cast — on the ceiling of the gallery, behind the columns. But the right color was not blue. It was green. The green, a very, very pale sea green — looks blue. The blue looks too bright. So I got the bluish cast for the black and red by painting a sea-green white.

Now the whole thing was still only half done. The columns and ceiling were clear; but the beams, upper columns, and main ceiling, were still totally unclear. We tried many, many colors — red, grey, greyish red, reddish grey, white, black — on these other places. None of them amounted to anything. They didn't continue the feeling of the black and red columns.



First vision of color based on the feeling developed earlier: Black, red and faint traces of a bluish haze are all visible

They were just colors. I realized that once again, the thing was lacking on the level of the inner vision. So once again, I simply sat in the water of my bath, looking, looking, with my eyes closed. For hours, nothing came. Finally, after many hours, I began to see a faint shimmering of black and white — something entirely different in quality, in feeling — from what I had been trying to paint.

I went to the office, and tried painting something like this, on the model I had on my desk. It seemed strange and unfamiliar. But it had some hope. But time had run out. The pressure of time, caused by the construction work, and my own schedule, put me in a corner. I had no more than a few hours left. I was in a terrible panic. I went over to the hall, certain that I had failed. And then, in my moment of failure, I grabbed a brush, and angrily, hurriedly, splashed

some colors on a mockup of the main beam — a huge sheet of paper, three meters long and seventy centimeters high, which represented a short section of the beam. I asked one of my assistants to put it up. And up there, amazingly, it fit just perfectly. It was a new animal, something different, amazingly different from the darkly glowing intensity of the black columns — but with just the right life to hold its own against them and yet support them at the same time.

It was solved. But once again, the key thing in the solution was not the work, the actual painting, the trying different things. It was the shimmering sense of black and white, which was quite different from anything I had tried before, which I saw only after immense effort.

It was the initial vision, the initial sense of color-feeling, which was the essential element. The hours of sitting intensely in the bath, eyes



Paper-covered mockup in the Great Hall, during construction, 1985

tightly shut, waiting until an authentic living vision entered my mind, was fifty times more work, emotionally, than the actual work of painting, trying, mockup, etc. That is where the value of the whole thing came from. At every step one takes, in an unfolding work, it is always the

process of knowing the emotional substance — and then getting it clear enough, so that it exists alive, in one's mind, and can be followed and materialized — which is so hard. This is the hard work, this is where the thing begins, and this is where its success or failure is determined.