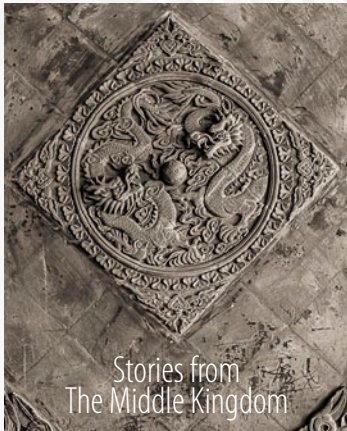




SKETCHES

*A Chapbook Series by
Brooks Jensen*



The Winter Light of Lozu Temple

Brooks Jensen

Brooks Jensen

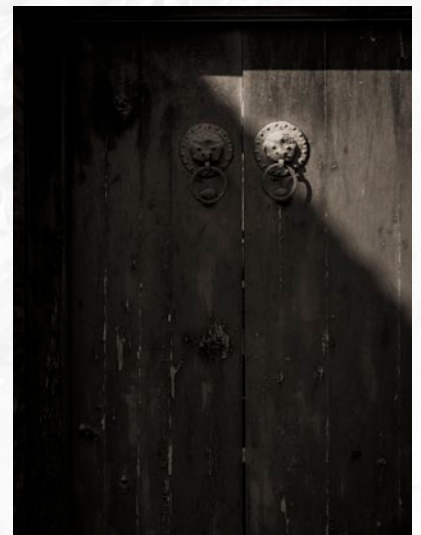


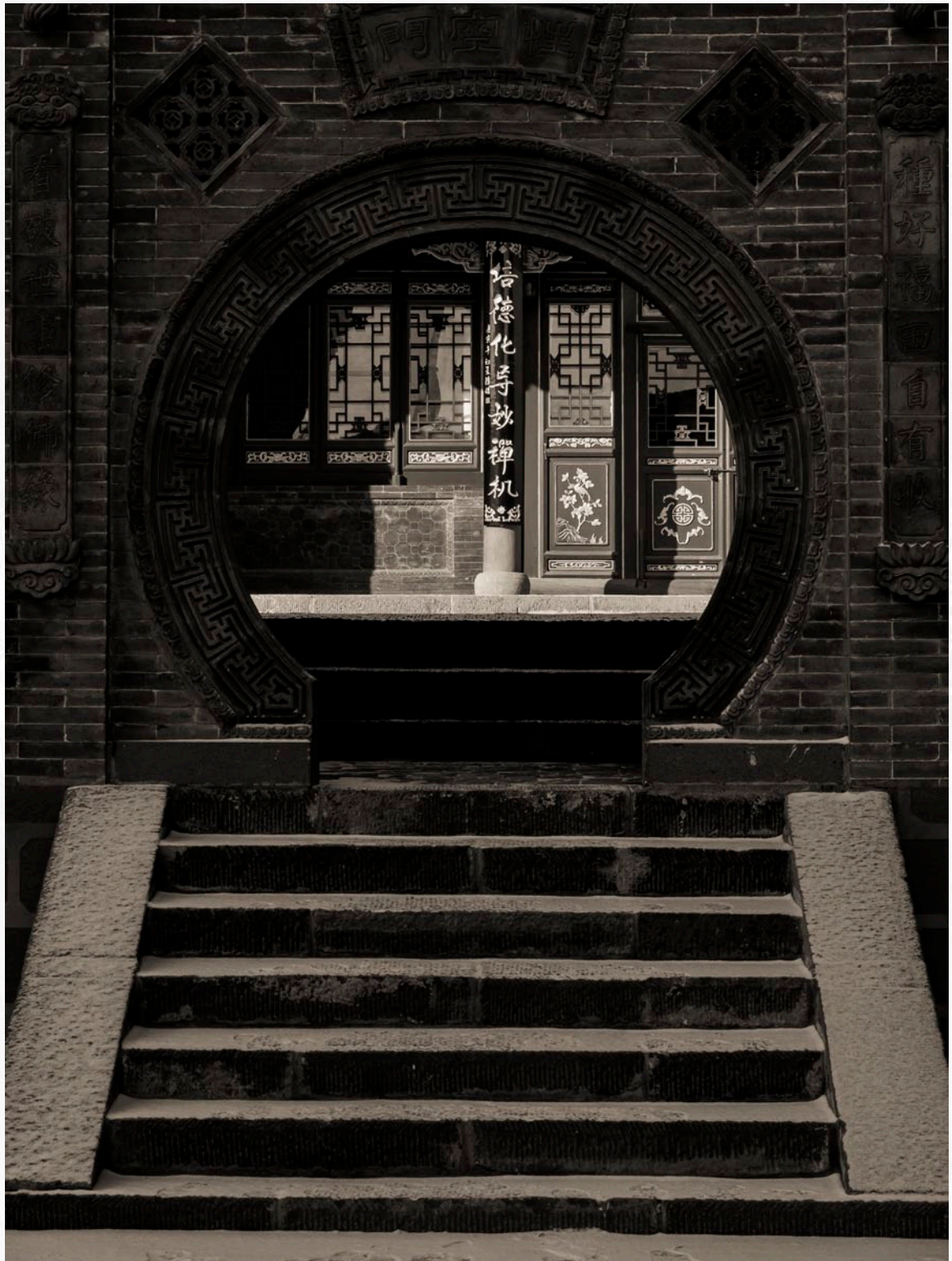


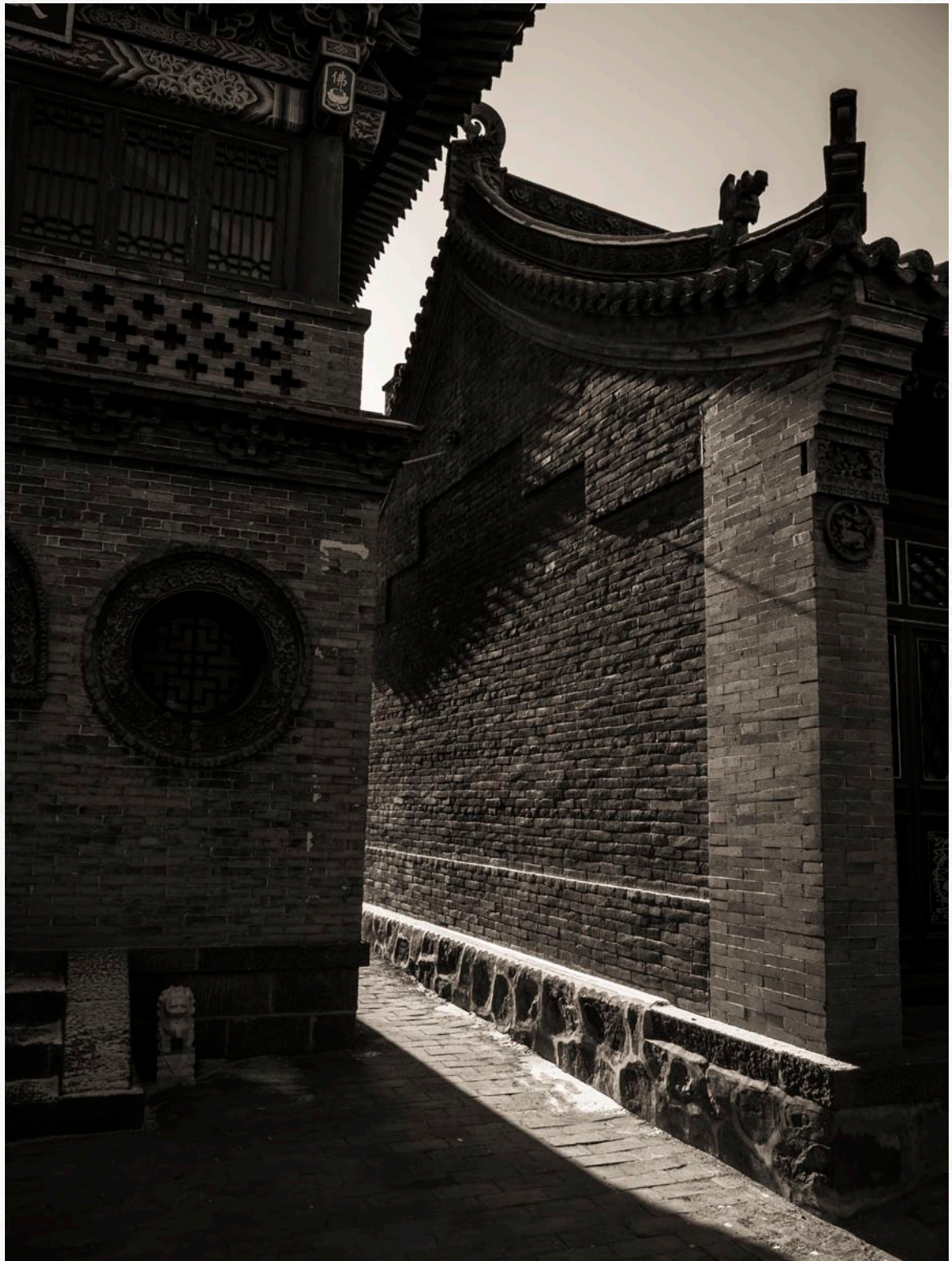
It never occurred to us to question the sanity of visiting inner-Mongolia in the dead of winter. Sure, it would be cold, but the photographic possibilities promised to be a warming counter to the bitter winds. For days, we'd photographed in the freezing Gobi desert. When someone offhandedly mentioned the ancient Lvzu Temple in the city of Baotou, we jumped at the urban opportunity.

The morning arrived with a light snow having accumulated during the night. That did not discourage the Sun, who arrived midday with a deep angle of illumination and a hint of warmth. The dry snow was constantly being blown off the steep roofs creating the illusion of a winter storm on the sunny day. Temple bells tinkled in the brisk winter breeze. Every step echoed a crunch underfoot from the dry powder. The day was timeless, the air clear, the light crisp, and the experience magical.

Built in the reign of Emperor Xianfeng (d. 1861), this temple is dedicated to Ancestor Lv who is always helpful to those who are ill and in need of mercy and care. A placard explained that since its construction, Lvzu has answered many prayers to those in need. For traveling photographers, it was a wonderful gift of winter beauty.



















It was an auspicious occasion — not just for photographers, but for the faithful, too, who arrived in throngs to offer incense and prayers at the communal altar in front of the main temple.













What is it — deep in the human psyche — that responds to places of religious worship? Regardless of the faith, it can be felt by all, in all locations. What is it? Could it be as simple that we look for light, that is, *enlightenment* in such places? Do we simply hope to see the face of God, the way out of the shadows of life, to touch that which is beyond the strife of earthly life and feel the illumination of Eternal Truth? Perhaps. Or, perhaps, we are simply pulled there against the cold reality of daily life for the comfort a few moments in these spaces can bring to our weary souls.

Sketches

*An ePublication Series by
Brooks Jensen*

The Winter Light of Luzu Temple

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