

INSTITUTE OF CURRENT WORLD AFFAIRS

RR-16
Kyoto by Photo

13 March 1969
28 Uguisudani-machi
Shibuya-ku, Tokyo

Mr. Richard Nolte
Executive Director
The Institute of Current World Affairs
535 Fifth Avenue
New York, N.Y. 10017

Dear Dick:

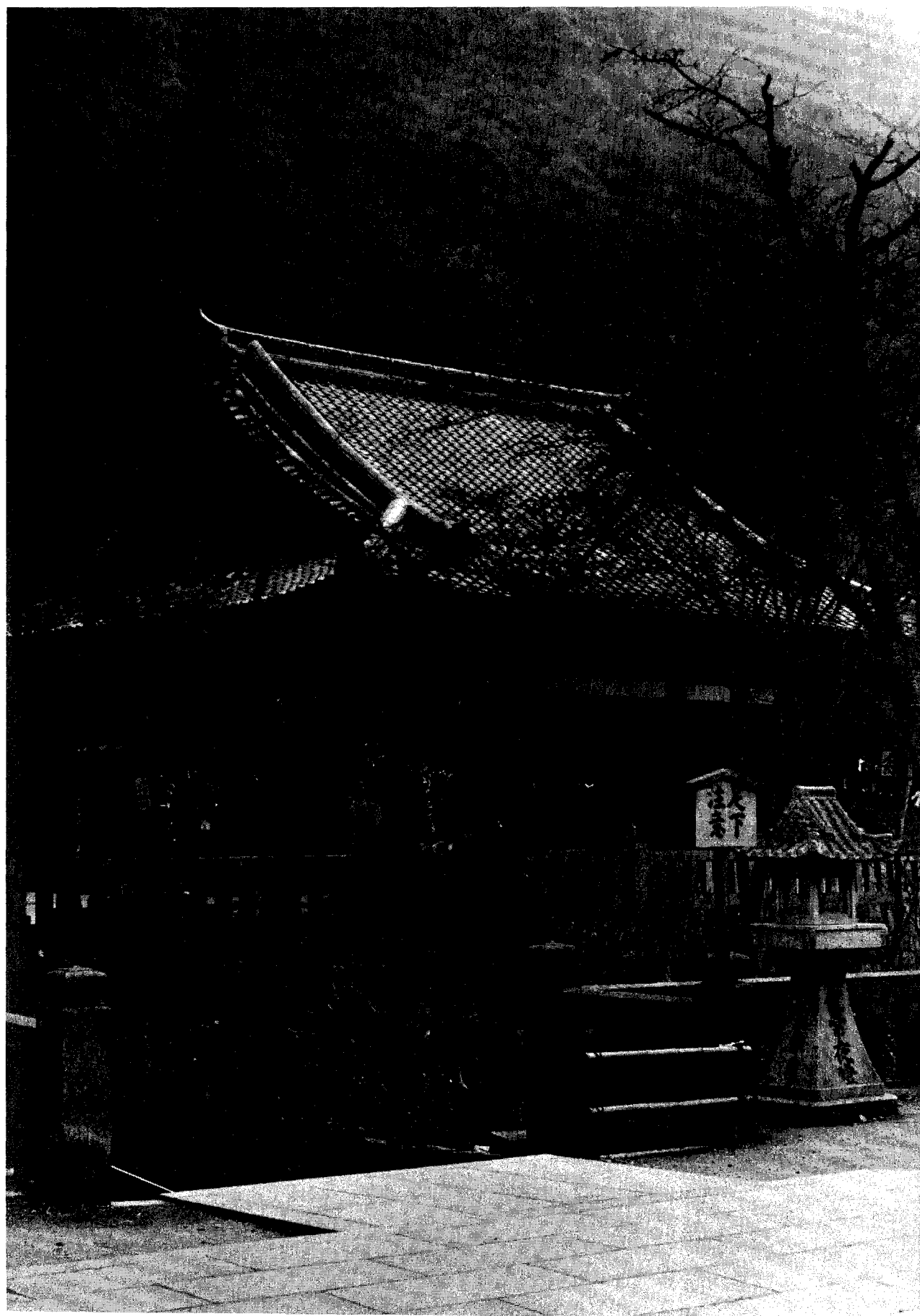
As a musician, I would, of course, prefer to make monthly reports by means of aural images - sounds collected, sounds devised. Since this is technically impractical, I do what seems the next best thing by including pictures whenever possible.

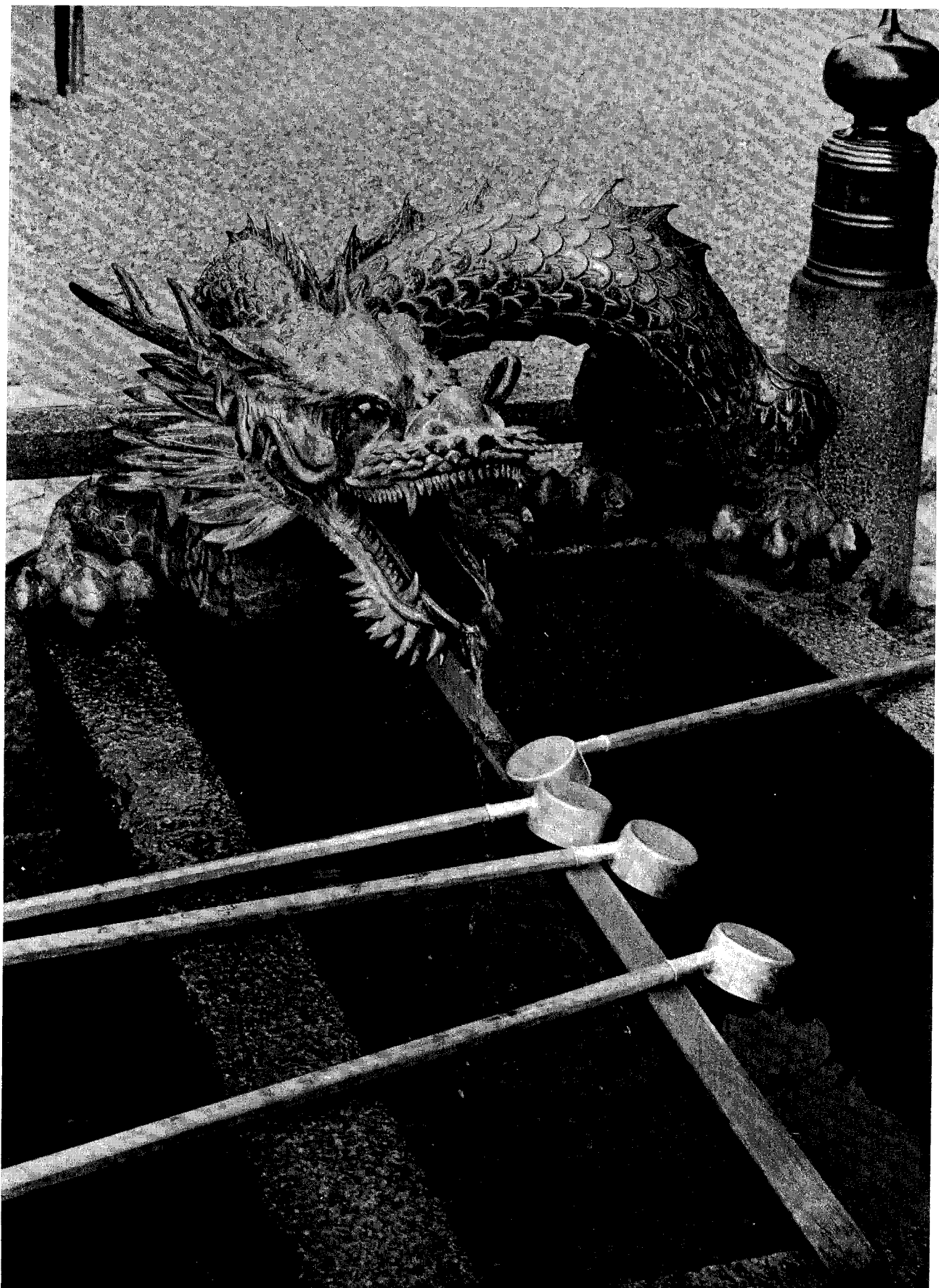
Still - the inevitable explanations rattle on, diluting the direct strength of the photographs, and subtly undermining whatever inclination one might have to look closely himself - to pause and gain what he can with his own eye.

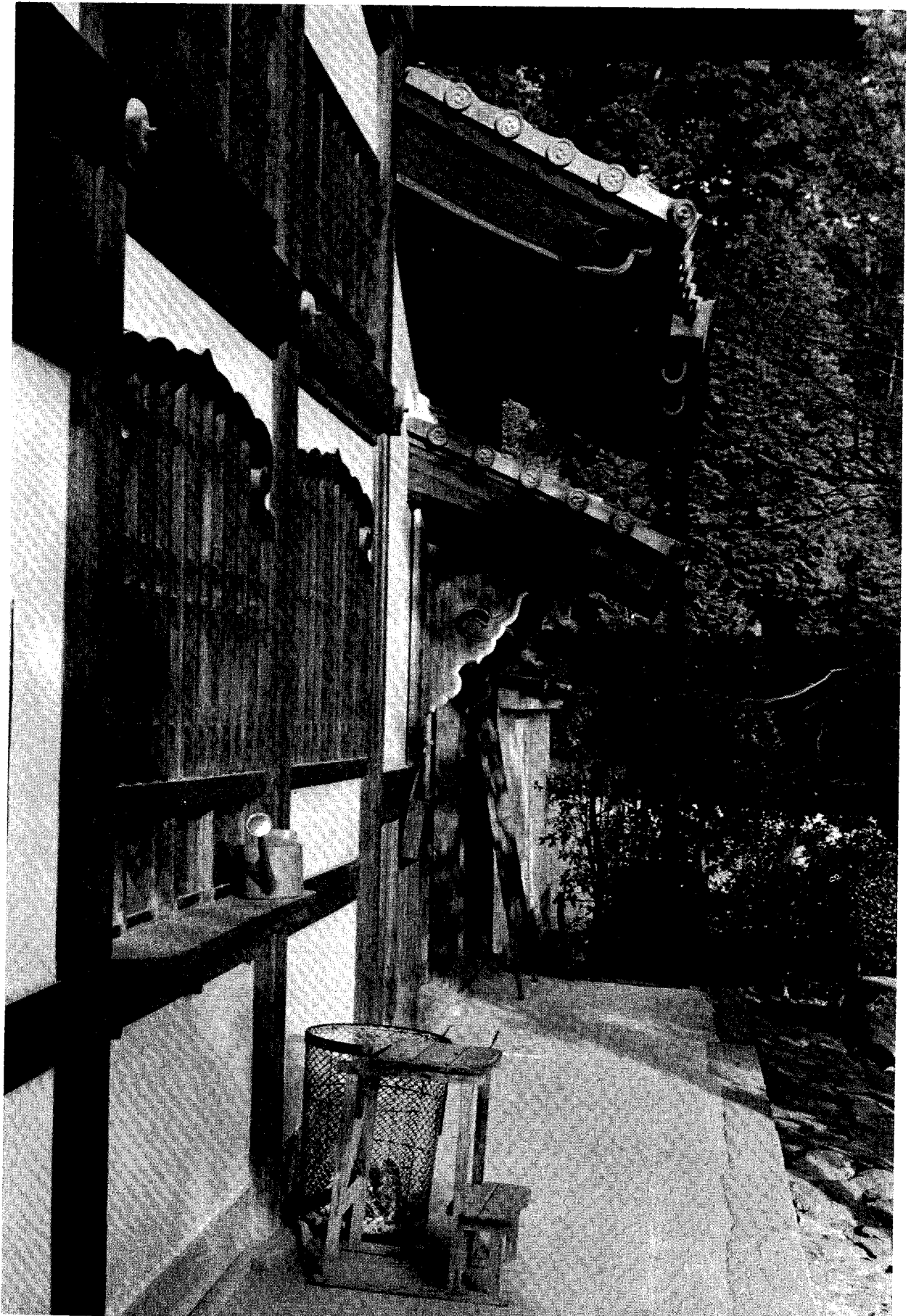
On a damp, recent day in Kyoto, I took a few pictures. No famous scenes are included. No explanations, historical or otherwise are imposed. There is a list of captions at the end, but I hope that by the time you get there they won't seem necessary. The variety of textures - rough and chiselled stone, cast concrete and baked tiles, coarse and polished wood, bare branches and ripe fruit, straw mats, bronze, and placid water - speak well and accurately of a very old and affecting city.

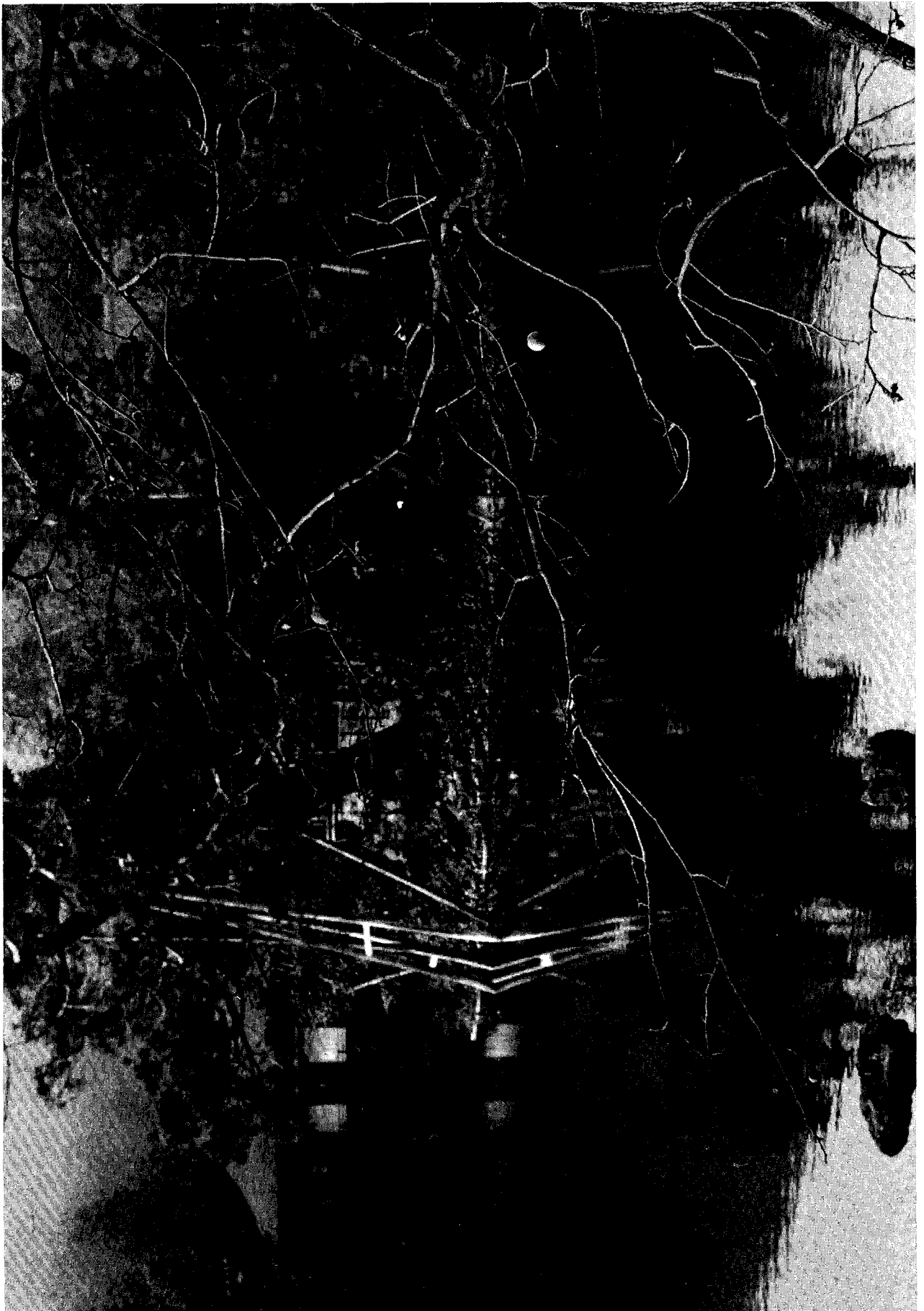
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Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Roger Reynolds'. The signature is fluid and stylized, with a large initial 'R' and a long, sweeping underline.

Roger Reynolds

CAPTIONS

- page 2 On a chilly morning, three women kneel quietly in the enormous matted room which is the primary space at the Heian Shrine (Shinto).
- page 3 Looking away from the Kiyomizu Dera (Shinto) towards one of the auxiliary buildings. The sign at the right directs all to watch their step in descending the long flight of stone steps that leads under the fall of purifying water for which this shrine is justly famous. The butterfly-like specks on the bare branches (center) are purchased fortunes tied there to (depending on your source) rid oneself of a disagreeable prognostication or to better assure a good fortune's development.
- page 4 An aged Chinese guest grudgingly offers some excellent spring water from communal cups. Also at Kiyomizu.
- page 5 A collection of diverse, unexceptional elements living comfortably together on the grounds of the Ryoanji with its famous rock garden.
- page 6 and 7
Two views of the small lake (known as Kyoyochi Pond) to the south of the Ryoanji temple itself (visible in the background). While not formally landscaped, this area, with its casual but great beauty, is certainly assisted. Trees on the grounds are rigorously braced, not just to keep them from toppling as in the picture on page 6, but to force them to grow perfectly parallel. Ryoanji is Zen Buddhist.

Received in New York March 18, 1969.