

# Chinese Power

## Summary

This project plans to document some energy production sites in China, such as power plants, dams, resource-based cities, solar and wind farms, etc. But due to the fickleness of COVID-19, I have only completed a small part of the project.

## Inspiration

My hometown, Shanxi Province, is called "the Hometown of Coal". Since I was young, I have been accustomed to huge industrial buildings and ever-changing landscapes. Moreover, almost all energy companies are state-owned enterprises. They once assumed the role of the government, building hospitals and schools, expropriating large tracts of land, and relocating large numbers of people. Manipulating the landscape is for economic purposes, but behind the economy is politics.

**My curiosity is, how did the production and transportation of energy reshape landscapes nationwide? And because these conglomerates are almost 100%**



Reference © Victoria Sambunaris



Reference © Mitch Epstein

**state-owned, how do they embody the will of the state?**

## Research

China is the largest energy producer and consumer in the world. In terms of the volume of related engineering projects, Chinese people also have a certain paranoia about immensity. It has the world's largest coal power station, hydropower station, and wind farm. Because the energy production area is far from the energy consumption area, China has built the world's longest gas pipeline and transmission network to transport natural gas and electricity from the West to the East.

I mainly selected some areas in the central and western regions as my destination. These places are important energy bases in China. Shanxi Province and Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region are coal bases. Shaanxi Province has a large amount of coal, oil, and natural gas. There is the world's largest solar farm in Ningxia Province, and there are a series of large hydropower stations on the upper reaches of the Yellow River in Qinghai Province.



In Google Maps, I created many lists of related places, such as coal, oil, natural gas, hydroelectric stations, etc. These pushpins formed my shooting route on the map.



A fact: As long as one reservoir is built, many reservoirs must be built to supplement it. There are 26 large-scale reservoirs and 170 medium-sized reservoirs in the middle and upper reaches of the Yellow River.

## Development

1. For this project, Google Maps played an important role. It is my action guide. When I arrived at an energy production site, I browsed Google Maps, and then I could find much massive manipulation of landscape. I added pushpins on the locations I was interested in and then drove there. Some Google satellite images are also good photos. They are God's perspective, while my photos are human's perspective. The relationship between grand narrative and daily life is also my interest.

2. I bought a second-hand van and converted it into a camper van. Soon after, to stand on the roof to take pictures, I replaced the roof box with a roof rack. Perspective is critical, and new perspectives will bring new discoveries. I often climb to the top of high-rise residential buildings to see what I will find.

3. I brought a GoPro camera, a diary, maps and related literature books. I want to record my travels, which is also part of my work.

4. I planned to shoot this project with a large-format camera that can record more details. But energy companies are so alert to cameras that I had to take many photos with a medium-format camera. In China, energy companies are often ignored. Only when accidents happen cameras will aim at them.



## Selected images from the project *Chinese Power*



Wutai County, Shanxi Province



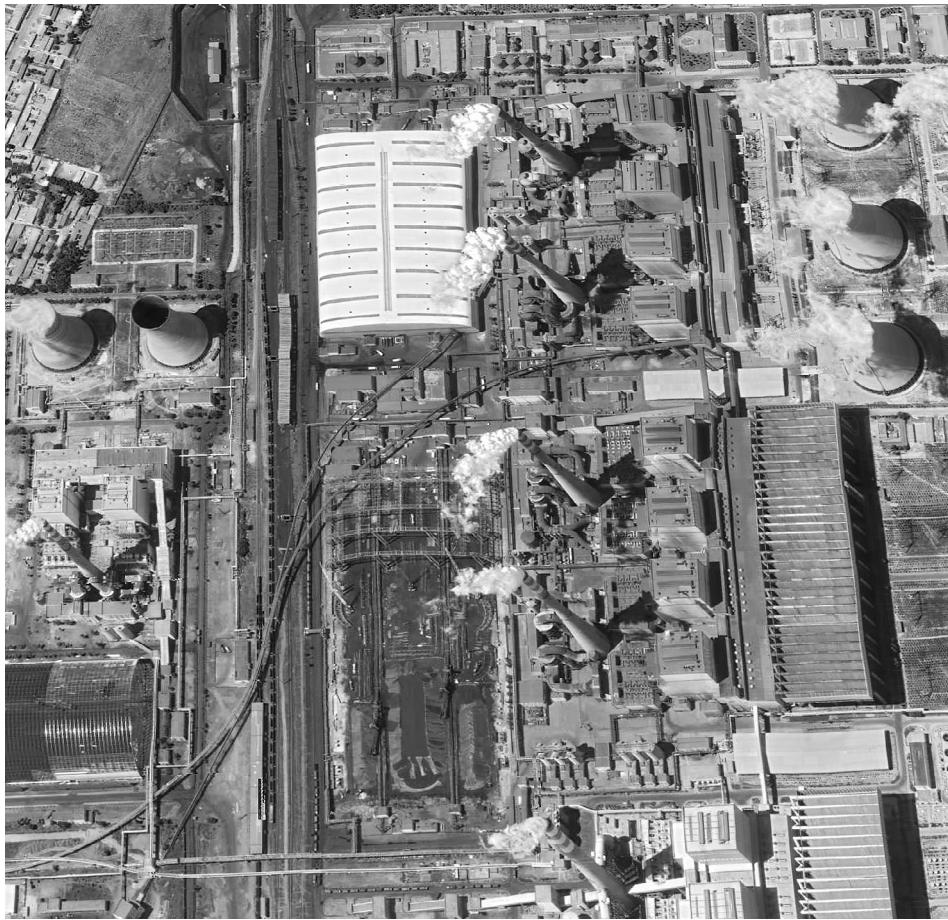
Cetian Reservoir is located in Datong City, Shanxi Province. Shanxi is a province with severe water shortage, but the water from the Cetian Reservoir is often transported to Beijing.



Xilamuren Grassland, Inner Mongolia Autonomous Region



A coal-fired power station that is under construction, Shanxi Province



The satellite image of Tuoketuo Power Station, the largest coal-fired power station in the world, Inner Mongolia



A village near Tuoketuo Power Station, Inner Mongolia



Nanyao Coal Mine,  
Huairou City,  
Shanxi Province



The satellite image of the  
same location and direction

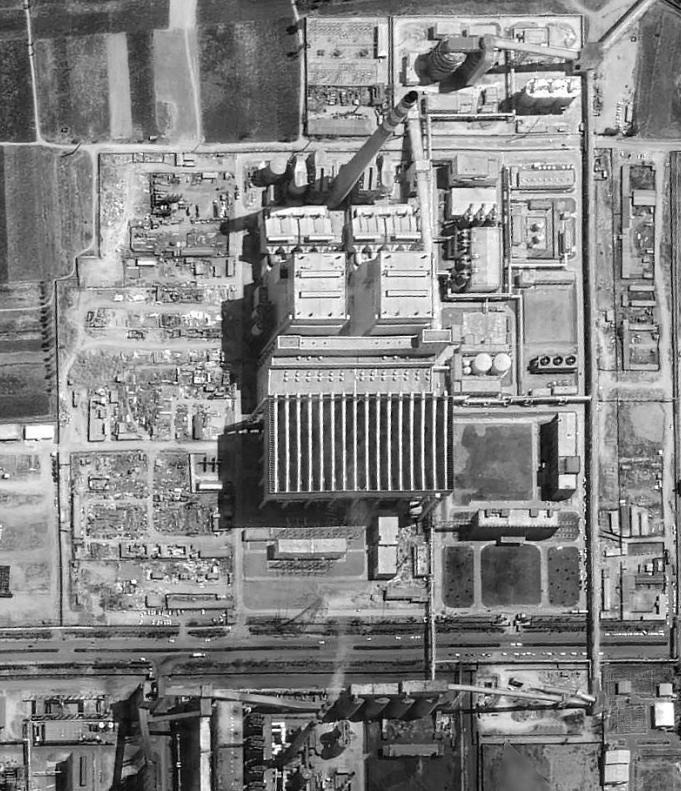


A community of coal workers



Dong Taibao Coal Mine, once the world's largest open-pit coal mine, Shanxi Province

A train full of coal, Shanxi Province. Daqin railway runs more than 100 pairs of trains at the speed of 80 km/h per day, generating a daily transport capacity of 1 million tons coal.



A gangue power plant. Coal gangue is also known as low-calorific coal, which is waste product from the mining and processing of coal. The satellite image of the same location and direction

A tavern near the power plant



Taiyuan City, Shanxi Province



Dismantling for constructing, Shanxi Province