

China embarking on a skiing revolution

By Kade Krichko, Powder

The sun hasn't yet made it over the dusty city skyline, but human friction offsets the morning chill as businessmen, students, and errand-runners ebb and flow to the singsong commands drifting from the concrete rafters of the Beijing subway station. Three stops down Line 13, a ski bus waits to shuttle groups of giggling teenagers to Nanshan Ski, the closest ski resort to China's capital city. On this platform, I'm struggling to find breathing room amid a city of 21 million.

Skiing is not a new phenomenon in China. The sport has been traced back over 10,000 years to semi-nomadic tribes in the country's Tian Shan Range—the first skiers in the world, according to many historians.

Yet it took until two decades ago, and the start of China's free market explosion, for the public to show interest in the sport. After years of poverty and oppression, Chinese skiing began as a symbol of prosperity and status, a Western practice in a country full of newfound wealth.

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