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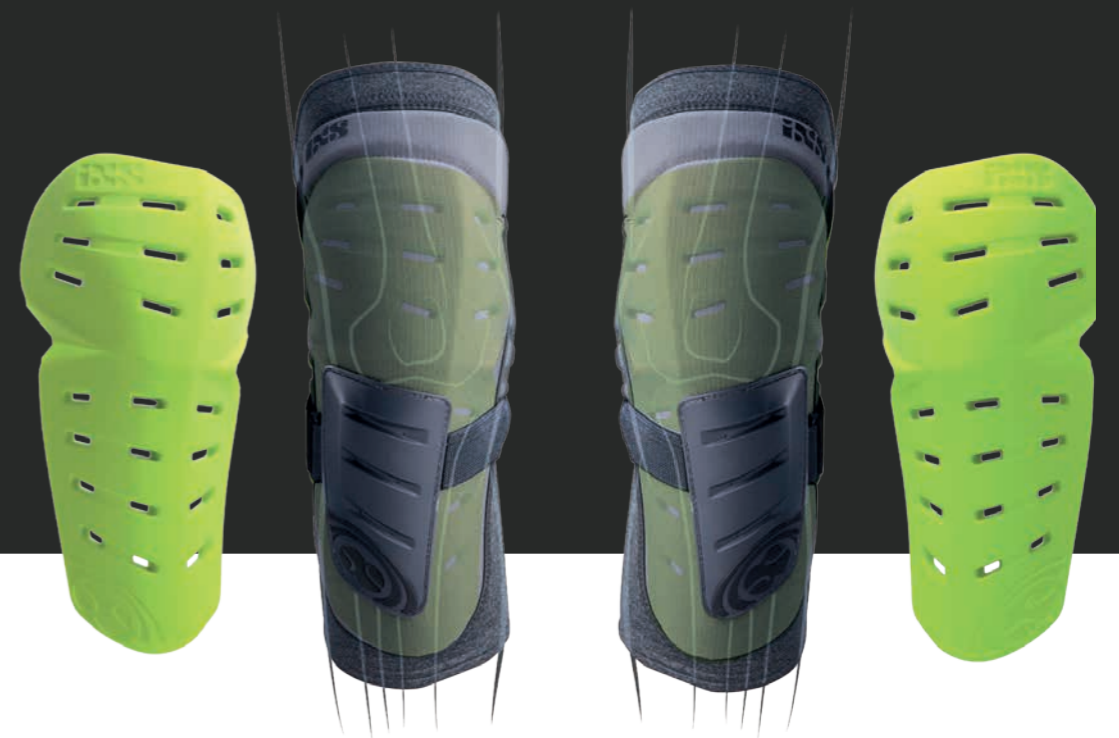
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Aurelius Satlow



**Having a Cup of Coffee with Daisuke
Riding and Digging in Japan**

Being part of Loose Riders China I always want to know what's going on in other Loose Rider chapters. One day I came across the insta of Loose Riders Japan and instantly stunned by their amazing shots on their account. The connection was made quick, after chatting and agreeing to ride together one day in Japan I had the idea of having a cup of coffee and go on chatting via Skype.





That was
how I got
in touch with
Daisuke, who is
in charge of Loose
Riders Japan.

9 years ago, Daisuke
Noma, took for the first time
his Cannondale Hardtail MTB
out in Kawasaki near Tokyo. The
now 29 years old Daisuke said, since
there weren't good places to ride, he
decided to leave Japan in 2014 and went
to live in Kamloops / Canada for 2 years
and then another 1.5 years in Queenstown /
New Zealand. In Canada he of course rode
the famous jump lines near Kamloops and in



Whistler and also the first time got in touch with the Loose Riders Community there. After returning to Japan in 2018, he not only founded the Loose Riders Japan Chapter, but also began to work as a trail builder patrol at the Hakuba Iwatake MTB Park.

He had chosen to go to Hakuba, because that's one of the epicenters of MTB in Japan. Located in the middle of Japan in the prefecture Nagano, Hakuba's MTB history begins already in the 1990s. There evolved a lively MTB scene out of Hakuba as a winter



sport destination including gondola, hotels and more. At that time the first races were held with more than 1000 participants and riders coming from abroad. It was also in the mid of the 1990s the Hakuba MTB Park opened, btw about the same time with Whistler. Later the bike park had a shut-down for some years and then reopened in 2015. Nowadays its definitely one of the must-go places for MTB riding in Japan. They got a downhill line of awesome 7 km, a XCO-Line through a chilly forest, a Dual Pump Track and lots of single trails nearby.

A full-page photograph of a mountain biker in mid-air, performing a jump over a dirt mound. The rider is wearing a blue and white helmet, goggles, a white jersey with a large eye graphic, black long sleeves, and black pants. The bike is green and black. The background features a vast mountain landscape under a cloudy sky, with some green grass and tall grasses in the foreground. A black diagonal bar is on the left side, containing white text.


Over winter, Hakuba is one of Japan's Ski- and Snowboard Meccas, they even had the Winter Olympic Games there, and so it came some of the people, who are into Wintersports, began to ride MTB in summer. On a normal Weekend bike park day one can see up to hundred riders in Hakuba MTB Park and Daisuke states, „The spirit of the riders in Hakuba remembers me of the riders in Kamloops and Queenstown.“

By the way, Hakuba Iwatake also had been

the location for shooting of Brandon Semenuks „First Tracks in Japan“ in 2019. For that Brandon and his crew built a whole new line almost out of nothing within about 2 weeks. Daisuke and his friends also helped at the digging. Now, the line is still there, Daisuke rode it and finds „It's just insane!“

Since building trails in winter time isn't possible, Daisuke spends the Winter in Kyoto. But he's still actively involved into an interesting publishing project about MTB in Japan. We keep you posted what is all about. However,





talking about the MTB scene in Japan Daisuke is pretty excited, he tells me it has definitely been a lively and growing culture and it still is. Beside the already well established and well known Bike Parks such as in Hakuba, Fujiten, Fujimi and Fukui Izumi with decent DH Lines, there are way more spots with good lines and trails for example around Nagano (SRAM Bike Park, Rookies MTB Park), Kobe, Iwakuni and Matsuzaki, only to mention some of them. And of course, all over Japan there is spread a vast of single trails, built and shredded



by the locals,
for example
around Osaka,
where they have
a really active MTB
scene.

Within the last 5 years
there had been opened the
SKDP Indoor Park for Dirtjump
and Pumptrack, also in Hakuba/
Nagano; the Odawara Forest Bike
Park near Kanagawa; Yuta's Bike Park
(YTB) with a 4-Cross Line and a Dirtline
+ Pumptrack near Kofu; the Carnosa Indoor
Dirtpark also in Kofu, and the Forest Adventure
Park near Yokohama for XCO and „there is
many more going on“ in terms of trail projects,
that will be opened in the future, says Daisuke.



Daisuke graduated in Environmental Studies with a focus on touristic and sustainable use of mountainous areas. From his point of view there's still room and a need of improvement regarding a better integration of MTB and its surrounding infrastructures. Recently the Hakuba MTB Alliance puts effort in enhancing MTB in interaction of local riders and non-riders. They started a public trail project at the Odikura area, that is open next spring and will later be even expanded. Another project in its



beginnings
is the
Hakuba Valley
Trail, that will
cover a huge area
between Hakuba
and neighbor towns
and villages. Trail builder
and local government are
in conversations, established
a partnership and developed a
marketing plan.

Hearing from Daisuke about all these
fascinating spots and recent developments I
feel like immediately hop on the next plane to
Japan! I can't wait to meet up with him and
have rad Loose Riders shred session!

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ARCHIV: Xiao Cong

Mesum Verma
(Translated by: Aurelius Satlow)

INTERVIEW

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XIAO

CONG

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Hi Xiao Cong, tell us all little about you, age, what you do for a living, how many girlfriends ;-)?

My name is Xiao Cong and I am from Yanling County, Hunan Province. I am 23 years old. In terms of earning money, I got more than one job. I am a salesperson of Beijing Gundel Trading Co., Ltd., responsible for selling bicycle related products.

In addition, I'm also a repairman in a bicycle work shop in Changsha, where repairing MTB suspensions is my specialty. And I think, being a MTB rider is also one kind of my jobs. Since me and our team compete all over China and have gotten very good results over a long time, I should better call that my career.

I am not single, my girlfriend has always supported my riding, took care of me and encouraged me when I was injured.





How did you get infected with biking? Did you straight away ride a bike, or did you do some other sports before? Beside riding your bike fast down the hill, do you do other sports?

Since I was a kid, I liked to ride bicycles and studied the structure of bikes in order to modify or repair. In 2013, I started to search on the internet about mountain bikes, and found the film "Life Cycle" and began to understand what real mountain biking is. After a year of further research, I was still a student in 2014 and I worked for two months and bought my first real mountain bike for about 4,000 Yuan. Of course, it was only a hard tail because of a lack of money.

And then I started competing and my results got better and better. So back to the question you asked: I started riding straight away on a MTB. In addition to that, I occasionally ride go-kart, and I am very interested in sports where one can do technical tuning. Actually, there are many similarities between MTB and go-karting.

When did you decide to give it racing a try? What made you want to fight against the clock? What does racing mean to you? Are you nervous when you're in the start gate?

In autumn of 2014 I participated in the first race of my life, and later racing became like a part of my life. There are many reasons for me to race, the most important one is that it's really fun. And to be honest, riding or racing is just addictive! MTB is very exciting and people always try to ride fast.

Racing is a part of my life, and racing is a chance to show everyone my results in researching riding techniques. Taking part at races is like a party, like-minded friends get together to share and exchange what we have been studying and learning recently. And especially racing can prove that what I do is meaningful.

You know, of course everyone is nervous at the starting line for the first time, but since racing became a part of life, I'm usually not very nervous.





You are one of the very very few downhill riders in China who is seriously sponsored! How difficult is it in China to get sponsors? What is the deal? What you need to do for them? Do you also get money for living? Or only a budget for racing and traveling?

Opportunities to show your riding are pretty limited in China. There is no really good competition system or riding culture or atmosphere in China, young people in China are under a lot of pressure, and many of them give up riding, even though they are very talented and the sponsors would notice them after a while.

I always kept on reading about and studying riding techniques. And there is also a relatively stable riding club (SuXing Club) in Changsha, which has been recommended by Xiao Hui. I successfully joined the Beijing GDR team. Riders in China now want to become the best riders in the world, but that's impossible for them.

About sponsorship in China, I need to showcase the products they are selling, such as LEATT protective gear, MUC-OFF bike maintenance products, HT pedals, SIXPACK handlebars, RST forks, Feirui hubs, 0011 wheels, mtbmagasia. I need to actively promote their products by using these products when competing. The sponsors just cover the expenses for the material for races and maintenance equipment. My actual salary comes from working as a salesperson at Beijing Gundel Trading Co., Ltd. and my suspension maintenance work at the Bike Workshop.

Beside racing you are a bike mechanic! You service all parts and equipment we can think of on a mountain bike. You did a good job on my brakes. How did you learn this, to fix suspensions or other complicated components? And how did you get your clients? Who is sending the broken gears to you?

Thank you for your compliment! It has been already two years ago when I maintained the brakes for you and that was really simple.

Of course, to solve the problems of all the bike parts, I've got to understand the structure of them and got to have profound knowledge of all the appropriate tools, and all that just needed a vast amount of time when I collected lots of experience.

Since I was a child, I like to study the structure and principle of objects, and I have broken many things, not only bikes. So, when I was young, my friends all asked me to repair their bikes.

Later it was Xiao Hui again, who introduced me in repairing and maintaining MTB suspensions. And since I was deeply interested and constantly reviewed articles and information for 5 years, I collected enough experience to be able to repair the various problems of all the common MTB forks and rear shocks on the market. My customers usually find me through my Taobao shop, and some of them are riding friends who competed with me and later contacted me directly in WeChat. There are MTB friends all over the country who often send me their suspensions to repair, and it seems that there are now more and more long time customers.





This year, except once (that I've seen), you were at the number one spot in all races! How difficult is it for you to be always first? Do you think, you don't have any more challenges? How often do you train per week? How much of that is on the bike, how much training is off the bike (like gym)?

Hahaha, I ranked two times second place this year, one times third place, in all the other 13 races I was the Champion in the elite group. I didn't deliberately strive for the first place every time, I just always try my best to run out of my best condition. I don't find it too difficult, when racing I just enjoy that intense character, the flowing through pumps and cheering from the audience.

My research on MTB riding technique is endless. I feel like there is still a long way full of challenges if I want to obtain better riding skills. Next, I hope to have the opportunity to ride in Canada to strengthen my riding. The time for training I usually find directly at the races; there is no fixed training time and we often go to races any ways. Also, in daily life I usually use my bike to go somewhere, so I'm always riding. I go to the gym, but not often, because I am usually too busy.

How do you like the races in China? How do you think it's managed? Did you go to Malaysia last year for the Mad Enduro? Did you see any difference in how they organised and managed the races? What did you like there, what did you miss there?

I like the Chinese MTB races, this is the context I grew up in. Although there are always competitions, a complete consistent league system has not been formed yet. But I hope that becomes step by step better. I participated in MAD Enduro in Malaysia last year. Their event is really large with countless riders, many tracks and many young people participating. It's really an impeccable game. I don't know if their competition is part of a league system, but I see that there are really lots of young and powerful riders in Malaysia.





Do you dream of racing and riding in a foreign country? Where you would put your bike into the dirt? And why there? If you could only bring one bike, which bike would you take there?

I have two dreams. The first one is to become the world's fastest downhill racer, and often go abroad to ride with the world's best riders. The second is to establish a China Downhill League, a platform that raises up all hobby riders. My favourite place to ride would be Whistler Mountain Park in Canada, since there are the best trails in the world, and I would bring my downhill bike when going there.

What do you think is the future of gravity biking in China? Do you believe it's getting bigger, and if so, quickly or slowly? What do you think would be needed to boost biking much more in China?

I believe that the Chinese MTB community will become bigger, really big! But there're still difficulties. One is perhaps, that we have to wait for the young people to feel less pressured. And another is that there has to be a comprehensive competition system. I really think what China's cycling development needs most is to establish a consistent and complete league system.





You've just been in Chongqing filming a commercial for Warhorse! How was it? You had to ride mostly only stairs - any difficulties with that? How often are you asked to do a commercial for big brands in China?

That shooting worked out pretty good, for the photographer only wanted me to ride stairs. I had to get up before dawn, worked until dark and all the day long continued riding and pushing up the bike again. Afterwards I was exhausted, but also enjoyed it. I've got no regular advertising jobs. That always depends on the situation, if any photography team needs me, they can just contact us.

The last words are yours!

On the road of pursuing my dreams, I do believe that I can do it and stick to it. Because riding MTB is just awesome!

*We wish you all the best!!
Ride on!!
Keep it real!!*





Mayank Handa

Anisha Gurung

नवप्रकार पर्वतीय वेलोसिन्टयार्ड डिस्टांस





Nayar Valley Adventure Festival, held at Bilkhet Uttarakhand from 19th – 22nd November 2020, was an initiative by the Uttarakhand Government and supported by the Himalayan Adventure Festival Team. The event had multiple sports taking place, like a paragliding accuracy competition, angling, kayaking, trail running, and the MTB Race which was supported by WTH MTB Adventure. WTH MTB's prime focus is promoting MTB in Uttarakhand. The MTB Race had three stage races totaling 180km at elevations of 4000m and above. The main motive of this race was to promote MTB racing in Uttarakhand. This was the first MTB race organized in India since COVID struck.



The first stage of the race was 52km, starting from Lansdowne via Khairasain to Bilkhet; the second stage of 62km was from Bilkhet via Pauri to Garuda Camp; the last stage was 52km from Garuda Camp to Bilkhet. There were 5 female and 27 male participant riders from different parts of India and also Nepal, with the top riders from both countries and also riders from SSB team, the Indian Army, and BSF team. The racing trails were mostly paved road with a mixture of technical off-roads. However, the trails were filled with phenomenal hills and mountains, forest, landscape and rivers bestowing the athletes with the tangible taste of Nature.



All the riders and staff were accommodated in tents, the whole event providing them with good outdoor flavour. They were served with selective nutritional foods only. The organiser team made sure of every rider's comfort and requirements. The race ended smoothly. Asish Sherpa from Himanchal bagged 1st position, and 2nd went to Ramesh Bharati from Uttarakhand. Akash Sherpa bagged 3rd in the open male category, while Usha Khanal and Anisha Gurung from Nepal took 1st and 2nd position respectively. There was a cash prize of 30k, 20k and 10k to 1st, 2nd and 3rd for both male and female.



The event also created an interactive and comforting environment between riders to share their cycling journeys with each other and get to know each other better. The homely environment was maintained by the organisers. That's also one of the reasons behind the success of Nayar Valley MTB Race. The diligence and deliberative plans of organisers and staff paid off with triumph. Nepali rider Usha Khanal said that she had a great race experience and praised the racing trails, and Anisha Gurung said that it was her first race in India and added that this race motivated her to come back next year. The happy faces of participants filled the organisers with gratification. This race will be an Annual Event and the organizers plan to take it to the next level in 2021.

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#SPECIALTHANKS

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