

Baby bump: China eatery in Japan soars on pregnant panda hopes

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Female giant panda Shin Shin (L) and male giant panda Ri Ri (R) at the Ueno Zoo in Tokyo mated in February for the first time in four years

Swelling hopes for a baby panda in Tokyo have bumped up the stock price of a Chinese restaurant chain in the area, with locals setting their sights on a flurry of tourists.

Eleven-year-old Shin Shin, who was brought to Ueno Zoo from China,

has been showing signs of pregnancy since last week after mating with male Ri Ri in February, according to zoo officials.

Giant pandas are notoriously clumsy at mating, with males said to be bad at determining when a female is in the right frame of mind and often befuddled at knowing what to do next.

In the event the animals do feel compatible, sex is frequently over too quickly to impregnate the female, who is only receptive to the proposition for two or three days a year between February and May.

But as hopes grow for a birth, stocks in [local businesses](#) in the Ueno area, and in particular Chinese [restaurant](#) chain Totenko, have jumped.

Totenko's share price hit its daily limit at mid-day Tuesday after the zoo—Japan's oldest—said it would halt viewing of Shin Shin on suspicion she may be pregnant.

Locals view a new [baby panda](#) as a huge draw for tourists, with retailers and souvenir shops expected to start selling panda-related goods.

The restaurant chain rose 7.02 percent to 198 yen (\$1.78). Shares have now soared more than 16 percent since last week.

Seiyoken, another restaurant group specialising in Western cuisine and which also has its main outlet in Ueno, gained more than 7 percent at one point on Tuesday.

Shin Shin gave birth to a baby in 2012, the first at the zoo in 24 years, but the cub died from pneumonia six days later.

According to estimates, less than 2,000 [giant pandas](#) remain in the wild, in three provinces in south-central China.

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