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Asahi Shimbun [Japan]

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**A Soaring Favourite \***

*[or maybe Ski Lift Rice Drying in Japan]*

In the well-known rice growing area of Minami-Uo-Numa city in Niigata Prefecture, you can see recently harvested rice soaring through the sky on a ski lift.

The rice is draped over the ski lift chairs which then travel at a slower pace than usual (about 1-2 metres per second) in order to let the rice dry in the alpine sunlight.

Only the highest quality “*kotsu-hikari*” rice from the Osawa area is chosen and then sold under the brand name “*Tenku”* rice (“Heavenly Rice” or “Sky Rice”].

The price is quite high - 5kg sells for about 10,000 yen (approx. CAD $100). Still, it is popular for gift giving and apparently sells out every year.

(by Yasutomo Fukutome)

(translated by David Sulz, 2014)

\*The headline is tricky to translate.

* 飛んだ (*tonda)* literally means “flew” or “soared” but also “super” or “extraordinary.”
* 人気者*(ninkimono)* means a “popular person” with other senses of  favourite, golden boy, golden girl, star, celebrity, hot ticket.
* Is there a possible anthropomorphizing of rice in Japanese culture?