

THE PENINSULA

T O K Y O

THE SEVEN SEAS PACIFIC AVIATION LOUNGE A TRIBUTE TO JAPANESE AVIATION

The Seven Seas Pacific Aviation Lounge, The Peninsula Tokyo's unique aviation-inspired venue, is located on the 24th floor, facing east with spectacular views of the city and an open-air promenade.

The Seven Seas Pacific Aviation Lounge is The Peninsula Hotels' latest aviation-themed location, including The China Clipper at The Peninsula Hong Kong (featuring the Pan Am China Clipper planes which traversed the Pacific from San Francisco to Hong Kong from 1935 – 1945), The Paribatra at The Peninsula Bangkok (depicting the history of aviation in Thailand), and The Peninsula Chicago's collection of historical US aviation memorabilia.

The lounge features aviation exhibits and memorabilia paying tribute to the history and development of Japan's civil and commercial aviation. From the first powered flight in 1910 to transpacific air travel of the 1950s and the vibrant aviation industry of today, The Seven Seas Pacific Aviation Lounge showcases an intimate, one-of-a-kind theme featuring aviation-inspired décor and furnishings, an open-air promenade and stunning views over Tokyo.

Highlights include an original 50-horsepower Gnome rotary engine (the same type that made the first powered flight in Japan), a full-size Rolls-Royce RB-211 turbine fan from a jet engine (that powers many modern jetliners), a large cutaway model of the Douglas DC-7C, an extensive selection of historical photos and models of significant historic Japanese commercial aircraft, together with a world route map and world time display showing air routes from Tokyo to the world.

The Spirit of Aviation

The first airplane flight in Japan is believed to have taken place on 29 April 1891, when a propeller-driven, unmanned model plane took off and flew about ten metres. The plane's inventor was Chuhachi Ninomiya, celebrated in his neighborhood as a master kite-builder. He named his airplane the "Crow Type Flying Machine" because it was a monoplane with a shape similar to a bird. It was 61 cm long and 59 cm wide with a three-wheel landing gear and a four-bladed propeller driven by elastic bands – a remarkably advanced design for its time. After the success of this model airplane,

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Ninomiya tried to develop a full-sized manned airplane. However, his genius and dreams of flight were not enough, and when he learned of the success of the Wright Brothers' flight in 1903, he abandoned his endeavors.

The First Flight

On 19 December 1910, the first powered aircraft flight in Japan took place from the open expanse of the Yoyogi Parade Ground in Tokyo. The pilot, Yoshitoshi Tokugawa, the first Japanese to be granted an international pilot's license, was flying a Farman biplane, purchased in France. The flight lasted only four minutes, but it was the beginning of a proud aviation tradition which has spanned the decades since.

The first flight of a Japanese-made, powered airplane was made on 5 May 1911. The plane was designed and built by Sanji Nagahara, a Japanese engineer, and was 10 m long, 9.2 m wide, and equipped with a 50-horsepower Gnome rotary engine. Nagahara made demonstration flights in many cities throughout Japan, showing the beauty and stability of flight to the amazement of the crowds.

Aviation development in Japan proceeded at a rapid pace, with many developments following quickly on the initial successes. Both Japanese and foreign aviators contributed to the development of aviation in Japan, and due to Japan's position on the edge of the vast Pacific Ocean, it became a natural destination for world travelers and round-the-world demonstration flights from many countries.

The Pacific Challenge

As Charles Lindbergh had made the first non-stop flight across the Atlantic from New York to Paris in 1927, many dreamed of being the first to emulate this feat across the unconquered Pacific. Lindbergh had become an international hero overnight, and so the famous Japanese newspaper *Asahi Shimbun* decided to offer a prize for the first non-stop transpacific flight following in the aftermath of Charles Lindbergh's transatlantic triumph. The Japanese believed that the first

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successful transpacific flight, which was longer and more demanding than crossing the Atlantic, would help focus attention on Japan's emergence in the aviation field – and hopefully a Japanese pilot and plane could be the first.

A daring young Japanese pilot, Seiji Yoshihara, made one of the early attempts. Yoshihara had already made a flight from Berlin to Tokyo in a tiny, open-cockpit Junkers A-50. He reasoned that the fuel economy of his airplane's 85-hp engine would enable him to cross the Pacific with a good safety margin. Equipping the Junkers with floats for water take-off and landing, Yoshihara took off on 18 May 1931, following the great circle route and hoping to reach America somewhere on the west coast. He had covered almost 1,000 miles when his little floatplane developed engine trouble, and he was forced to ditch in the Pacific. Miraculously, a passing ship picked him up seven hours later.

Also hoping to win the prize, the Kawanishi company designed and built the K-12 *Nichi-Bei-Go* (Japan - U.S. Model), an extremely ambitious undertaking based on the design of Lindbergh's Ryan monoplane. Although the K-12 did not achieve success, it was nonetheless commendable for the vision of its creators.

October 1931 finally saw the culmination of the first successful non-stop transpacific flight from Japan to North America. American fliers Hugh Herndon and Clyde Pangborn took off from Sabishiro Beach and flew their bright red Bellanca Skyrocket "Miss Veedol" a perilous 4,860 miles to a belly-landing near Wenatchee, Washington, thus winning the \$50,000 prize offered by the *Asahi Shimbun*.

Early Commercial Aviation

In 1922 and 1923, three small companies began commercial air services in Japan. They covered short routes between important cities on a trial basis. The first was Japan Air Transport Institute, a private company, which flew passengers between the cities of Sakai and Tokushima. The earliest airliners were wood and fabric biplanes with closed cabins seating four to six passengers and an open cockpit for the pilots. Passengers were few – but enthusiastic for the new air travel.

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To encourage the more rapid development of civil aviation, in 1928 the Japanese government helped to set up the first national airline, the Japan Air Transport Corporation (JAT), which absorbed the three earlier companies. JAT began regular passenger service in 1929. The growth and popularity of domestic airlines led to the construction of the first modern airport in Tokyo, Haneda Airport, which opened in August 1931.

JAT flew the rugged and dependable single-engine Fokker Super Universals and Fokker Tri-motors in the pioneering of many routes. Foreign aircraft such as the Super Universal and aircraft engines such as the Bristol Jupiter were license-built by the Nakajima Company to gain experience in aviation technology. JAT introduced its first modern airliner, the 14-passenger Douglas DC-2, in 1936 purchased from the United States. These were followed by new aircraft developed in Japan such as the eight-passenger Nakajima AT-2 airliner and the 11-passenger Mitsubishi MC-20 transport. The Japanese also built nearly 500 21-passenger Douglas DC-3s through a licensing agreement with the Douglas Company.

By 1951, Japan would enter the modern era of civilian air transport by forming what is today known as Japan Air Lines.

The Seven Seas

The Seven Seas' name derives from the legendary DC-7 airliner of 1955. The DC-7 was one of the ultimate expressions of the propeller driven airliner, with four engines, 15,000 horsepower and a range to span the oceans in first class comfort and luxury. The ultimate DC-7, the "C" model was nicknamed the "Seven Seas" – a tribute to its name and unique capabilities.

In the 1950s, transpacific air travel was not nearly as commonplace as it is today. Air travel, as promoted by the airlines, carried with it an air of luxury and exclusivity, which was built into the ultimate propeller driven aircraft of the day, the Douglas DC-7C, which entered service on February 12, 1958. Japan Air Lines owned five DC-7C aircraft in the transition preceding the introduction of jet aircraft. The DC-7C was an innovative aircraft that used turbo-compound engines to achieve higher speeds and a longer range. The aircraft could carry from 48 to 72 passengers on international

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flights, depending on the interior arrangements, and had a cruising speed of 550km/h.

The spectacular cutaway model of the DC-7C displayed in The Seven Seas Pacific Aviation Lounge will give guests a glimpse of the luxury accommodation for the privileged few, for whom crossing the Pacific was an exciting adventure.

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About The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels, Limited (HSH)

Incorporated in 1866 and listed on The Stock Exchange of Hong Kong (00045), HSH is the holding company of a Group which is engaged in the ownership, development and management of prestigious hotel, commercial and residential properties in key locations in Asia, the United States and Europe, as well as the provision of transport, club management and other services. The hotel portfolio of the Group comprises The Peninsula Hotels in Hong Kong, Shanghai, Beijing, New York, Chicago, Beverly Hills, Tokyo, Bangkok, Manila and Paris (opening in 2013). The property portfolio of the Group includes The Repulse Bay Complex, The Peak Tower and The Peak Tramways, St. John's Building, The Landmark in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam and the Thai Country Club in Bangkok, Thailand.

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