

Press Release

Milestone for Zeppelin NT – „Bodensee“ handed over to its new owner Nippon Airship Corporation

Friedrichshafen – On June 12th, 2004 the Zeppelin NT S/N 2 (prior called Bodensee) was handed over to its new owner Nippon Airship Corporation (NAC). The airship "Yokoso! Japan" will be flying the historic route to Japan crossing all over Russia. On the morning of June 13th the airship took off for the first part of the transfer flight passing through many major cities of Europe before it will finally start the crossing of Russia by the mid of July.

The 247-foot ship, which is destined for sightseeing and advertising flights in Japan and a starring role at the 2005 world's fair in the city of Aichi.

The maiden flight of this unique semi-rigid airship was undertaken on 18th September 1997. This modern multi-mission airship from Zeppelin Luftschifftechnik GmbH combines practical experience with modern high technology.

"This is an important day in the history of Zeppelin Luftschifftechnik - the very first time that a Zeppelin NT has been sold," Zeppelin manager Bernd Straeter said as some 500 people gathered for Saturday's ceremony at the company's huge airship hangar in Friedrichshafen, on the shores of Lake Constance in southern Germany.

Zeppelin Luftschifftechnik started building the new dirigibles, which are about one-third the length of the Hindenburg, in 1996, but the sale to the Nippon Airship Corporation - sealed in March - was its first sold of a Zeppelin NT.

On Sunday, the cigar-shaped craft - with "Germany in Japan" painted in large black letters on its side - is to take off on its journey to Japan, where it should arrive by mid-August. The journey comes 75 years after the LZ 127 Graf Zeppelin flew from Friedrichshafen to Tokyo.

There's room for 12 passengers and two crew members in the new ship's gondola, but it won't be taking passengers as it zigzags across Europe and on to Asia. Three pilots and three technicians for the airship's new owner were given a three-month course of intensive training in Germany to prepare for the voyage.

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