

## 神戸市政のあゆみ History of Kobe's Municipal Government

### 1. 市制の施行 Kobe Becomes a City

In 1888, Japan implemented a major reform of its local administration when the modern municipal system was established. As a result, Kobe City was officially founded on April 1, 1889. Formed by merging the villages of Fukiai and Arata with Kobe Ward, the new city covered an area of 21.28 square kilometers and had a population of 135,000. Narutaki Yukikiyo was appointed as its first mayor.

### 2. 上水道の建設と拡張 Construction and Expansion of Kobe City Waterworks

Kobe City's population grew rapidly after the port opened, making it vital to secure water for daily use and prevent infectious diseases. As such, mayor at that time Narutaki Yukikiyo worked tirelessly to ensure that the necessary water supply infrastructure was in place. Kobe began supplying water from the Nunobiki and Karasuhara reservoirs in 1900. Expansion projects starting in 1911 saw the construction of the Sengari Reservoir, water purification plants, and distribution facilities, enabling water to be supplied to various parts of the city.

### 3. 六甲山の砂防植林 Extensive Reforestation of Mount Rokko's Bare Slopes for Erosion Control

Mount Rokko had suffered extensive deforestation, leaving it prone to frequent sediment disasters. To address this issue, work began in the 1890s to control erosion and stabilize the mountainside. Starting in 1903, reforestation efforts were implemented under a plan devised by Dr. Honda Seiroku, a forestry expert. As a result, Mount Rokko was restored to its lush, green state.

### 4. 教育制度と小学校の整備 Establishment of the Education System and Elementary Schools

Tsubono Heitaro, the second mayor of Kobo City, pushed for an increase in female teachers. With the revision of the Elementary School Ordinance in 1900, the compulsory education system was established. Kobe City provided support so that working children could attend school. As a result, the number of children enrolled surged, and from 1901 onward, new elementary schools were established and branch schools were made independent. Furthermore, a morning/afternoon class system was introduced to address the shortage of classrooms.

#### **5. 神戸港の第一期修築工事 First-phase Construction Work of Kobe Port**

The Port of Kobe grew to become one of Japan's foremost trading ports. Minakami Hiromi (Hirochika), the third mayor of Kobe City, called for large-scale port improvements as a matter of urgency. The first phase of construction works was completed in 1922, creating a modern port equipped with a wharf capable of accommodating large ships and a rail network.

#### **6. 市営電気事業の始まり Municipalization of the Electric Power Business**

Kobe Electric Company operated trams and supplied electricity within the urban area in Kobe. In 1917, Kajima Fusajiro, the fourth mayor of Kobe City, bought out this company for the purpose of expanding the city's tram network.

#### **7. 学区の統一 Unification of School Districts**

There were six school districts in Kobe City responsible for establishing schools. However, differences in property tax revenue between districts led to disparities in education. This prompted the governor of Hyogo Prefecture in 1917 to seek advice on unifying the school districts. The city council conducted investigations and passed resolutions to this end, leading to the unification of school districts in 1919. This ensured equality in education throughout the city.

#### **8. 都市計画事業の進展 Advances in Urban Planning Projects**

The former Urban Planning Act was promulgated in 1919. Based on this act, Kobe City established urban planning districts in 1922, designating zones for commercial, industrial, and residential use. It also drew up street plans, extended the tram lines, and improved roads. The Land Readjustment Association, established in 1923, further propelled urbanization.

#### **9. 社会政策の展開 Development of Social Policies**

Rice riots erupted amid inflation driven by World War I, with Kobe City also witnessing protests against soaring rice prices. To help its struggling citizens, the city established public markets and eateries while expanding relief programs. Also, the postwar depression led to more people falling behind on their city tax payments, creating a financial burden that necessitated tax increases.