

10. 金融恐慌と失業・財政問題 **Unemployment and Fiscal Problems Caused by the Financial Crisis**

In 1927, bank runs occurred across Japan. In Kobe, the general trading company Suzuki Shoten went bankrupt, and Kawasaki Dockyard laid off workers. Kurose Hiroshi, the seventh mayor of Kobe City, introduced measures to combat unemployment, including job placement services and civil works projects. However, the recession worsened and necessitated tax increases, which were met with growing opposition. A survey conducted by a specially appointed financial investigation committee formed in 1928 highlighted the importance of ensuring the independence and robustness of the city's finances.

11. 区制の始まり **Beginning of the Ward System**

In 1922, Sakurai Tetsutaro, the fifth mayor of Kobe City, presented a proposal for establishing administrative wards as a means to improve administrative efficiency. However, it was rejected as premature. Subsequently, the city's area expanded following a municipal merger in 1929, making the establishment of ward offices a top priority in terms of not only efficiency but also from the perspective of citizens' daily lives. Then mayor Kurose Hiroshi, who had been cautious, responded to these demands, and in 1931, an administrative ward system consisting of eight wards was put into effect.

12. 神戸港の第二期修築工事 **Second-phase Construction Work of Kobe Port**

Increased cargo at the Port of Kobe necessitated continued harbor improvement projects. As such, the second phase of port construction works began in 1919. However, recession in the aftermath of World War I led to the project's suspension. Katsuta Ginjiro, the eighth mayor of Kobe City, and the city council petitioned the government to resume the work. The project was finally completed in 1939 at a total cost of 78 million yen.

13. 戦時下の市民生活 **Civilian Life During Wartime**

With the outbreak of the Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937, Kobe's municipal administration shifted to a wartime system. 1939 saw the establishment of the Home Front Service Association, and the Kobe branch of the Imperial Rule Assistance Association was launched in 1941. The distribution of rations and air raid drills were conducted through neighborhood associations and neighborhood watch organizations. From then on, all aspects of civic life revolved around the war effort.

14. 阪神大水害 **The Great Hanshin Flood**

In July 1938, torrential rainfall caused rivers to flood and triggered mudslides, resulting in 616 deaths and damage to 89,715 homes. Kobe City initiated recovery efforts and petitioned the government for assistance. This disaster made flood control measures an integral part of Kobe City's urban planning.

15. 西神の新都市構想 Vision for Developing a New City in Western Kobe

Noda Bunichiro, the ninth mayor of Kobe City, spearheaded an ambitious plan to build a new city on the Akashi Plain. To this end, Kobe City established a survey committee and a port bureau in 1942. Although agreements were reached that same year to merge the planned areas, the merger could not proceed owing to the Outline of Emergency Measures for the Final Battle that the Cabinet enacted in 1944. Ultimately, this grand vision was never realized. However, the experience drawn from this period proved invaluable in the postwar development of Seishin New Town.

16. 神戸大空襲 The Great Kobe Air Raids

Air raids on Kobe resulted in unprecedented devastation within what is the current city area. Confirmed figures alone indicate approximately 530,000 victims, including 7,524 fatalities, 16,948 people with serious or minor injuries, and damage to about 142,586 homes.

16-1. 空襲の始まり Onset of Air Raids

In December 1941, Japan initiated the Pacific War. Kobe suffered its first air raid in April 1942. The evacuation of buildings began in 1943, followed by the evacuation of schoolchildren in 1944. From November of that year onward, air raids on mainland Japan by B-29 bombers intensified.

16-2. 爆撃目標になった神戸 Kobe, a Target for Bombardment

On February 4, 1945, Kobe sustained incendiary bomb attacks targeting its urban areas and military facilities. The damage was exacerbated by the city's elongated east-west terrain. It incurred particularly severe damage during air raids on March 17, May 11, June 5, and August 6.