



# Kobe City Museum

24, Kyo-machi, Chuo-ku, Kobe,  
650-0034 Japan

## Introduction...

Kobe City Museum was opened to the public in 1982. Before that time, there were two municipal facilities in the category of museum on the human culture, that were Municipal Archaeological Art Museum and Municipal Namban Art Museum. The establishment of Kobe City Museum was a start of a comprehensive museum on the human culture and the above-mentioned two museums came to form part of this new museum. Thus, Kobe City Museum took over all collections and activities of the two as well as framing its new theme of activity. From the view point that Kobe had been an international harbor since old years and had been playing a role as the gate and window of cultural intercourse between foreign countries and Japan, the fundamental theme of the new Museum was settled as "International Culture Exchange - Contact between Eastern and Western Cultures and Their Changes by the Interaction".

and unified with the existing one. The Museum looks on to the "Kyo-machi Street" which was once the central place of the former Kobe Foreign Settlement. Constructed in 1935, this building has an external appearance of a Greek shrine with six columns of the Doric style in the frontispiece, being given a high professional estimation to say that it is one of the most excellent architectural structures made in Showa period. To divert the building to a museum use will concurrently be to preserve this architecture for future generations.

In January 1995, the Great Hanshin Earthquake struck Kobe, destroying much of the central area. Fortunately, the collections were almost all safe and none of national treasure and other important items was damaged. Although the building became cracked, the basement with an auditorium and machinery equipment was submerged by liquefaction. The museum resumed its activities after a year's interruption due to restoration work.



The building of this Museum is a diversion from that of the former Kobe Branch, Bank of Tokyo (the name before was Yokohama Specie Bank). On the occasion of the diversion, some extension was built on the western side of the building



The Old Kobe Foreign Settlement (scale model)

The Old Kobe Foreign Settlement around 1897 is reproduced in this scale model (1/200) of about 350 buildings. Designed by J. W. Hart, an English civil engineer, the Foreign Settlement was a fine example of city planning in the 19th century.

## Permanent Exhibitions

The museum is devoted to the basic themes of "International Cultural Exchange" and "Contact Between and Changes in Eastern and Western Cultures. These themes are reflected in the Permanent Exhibition Rooms housing the Namban Art Museum as well as the Educational Room and Library. With Kobe as the focus, cultural exchange between Japan and other countries is explored under the following six main themes, in chronological order:

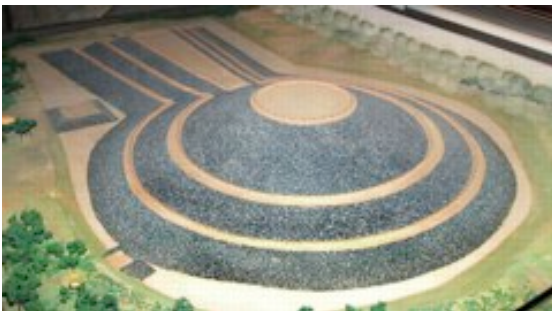
### Cultural exchange with East Asia Exhibition Rooms 4 & 5 (2F)

This exhibit traces developments from the origin of mankind to the establishment of an ancient society through the formation of an agricultural society. There are references to the beginning of rice planting, use of metal wares, and building of tombs in the course of exchange with China and Korea.



Bronze Bells and Halberds from Sakuragaoka (National Treasures)

Unearthed at Sakuragaoka, Nada-ku, Kobe, in 1964. Line drawings have been cast on the surface of bells No. 4 and 5.



Goshikizuka Kofun(Scale model)

A three-tiered keyhole-shaped mound, was built on the hill near the coastline from the end of the fourth and the fifth century. A cylindrical "haniwa" was discovered. The powerful regional chief buried here was presumably close-linked with sea transport.

### Growth of Regional Culture Exhibition Room 5 (2F)

Japan's reception of culture transmitted from the Asian Continent is shown in the images of local government offices and through the penetration of Buddhist culture into remote regions. Hyogo Port used to play an important role in the contacts with China and Korea, as well as within the Seto Inland Sea itself.



Special roof tiles with fierce demon faces called "Onigawara" were produced at Kande Kilns Group around the 12th century.

### Japan and Other Countries during the Age of Seclusionism Exhibition Room1 (1F)

The Edo Period (1603-1867) is often thought to have completely lacked contact with other countries, but the truth is otherwise. Here we show the influence of foreign countries through publications related to western learning and such objects foreign technology as telescopes, glassware and clocks.



Glassware. Edo Period

## The Hyogo-Tsu Port in the Edo Period Exhibition Room 1 (1F)

The Edo Period saw busy sea lanes both eastbound and westbound such as the Edo-Osaka Route, as well as great on surface routes. The glorious days of the Hyogo-Tsu era are shown through votive tablets, Tarukaisen (model ship), and other artifacts.



Tarukaisen ship transported sake produced in Nada on the sea route between Osaka and Edo.

foreign settlement are reproduced here through engravings published in the Illustrated London News, a scale model of the etc.

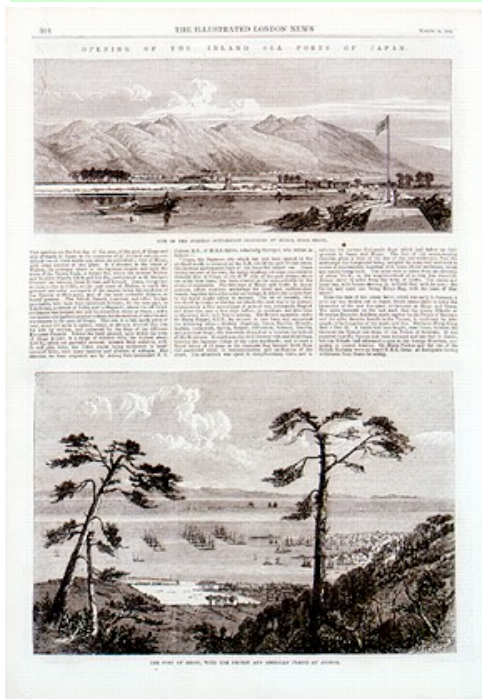
## Enlightenment and Modernization of Japan. Exhibition Room 3 (1F)

The Meiji Era exhibits focus on presenting the European's life in Japan and changes in lifestyles reflecting influences. Exhibits include new-started industries such as western-style furniture making, printing, shipbuilding and match making.



Western-style chairs made in Meiji era

## Port Opened for Foreign Trade Exhibition Rooms 1. 2 & 3 (1F)



Illustrated London News, 1968

The several decades before and after the opening of (Kobe Port to foreign trade (January, 1868) were turbulent days for Kobe. The days preceding the opening of the port and life in the

## Museum Collection

(displayed at a limited time only)

The Kobe City Museum owns nearly 39,000 objects, including a National Treasure comprising 21 items and six important Cultural Assets comprising 74 items. They are divided into the following general categories: archaeological artifacts, including bronze bells and bronze halberds unearthed at Sakuragaoka; nearly 7,000 objects of art, including color woodcut prints from the late 19th century and a Namban-style works, including "Equestrian Kings of Europe" collected by Hajime Ikenaga and "Portrait of Saint Francis Xavier"; nearly 8,000 old maps and geographical materials collected by Matsutaro Namba and Takejiro Akioka, among which are many maps produced in Japan and abroad, such as the "Small Map of Japan by (Tadataka) Ino" and "Japan Atlas Byobu"; and historical documents and artifacts regarding Kobe. Some objects of art and old maps can be displayed for only a limited time due to reasons connected with the preservation.

## Saint Francis Xavier



Portrait of St. Francis Xavier the Jesuit who first brought Christianity to Japan in 1549. Presumed to have been painted by a Japanese painter trained in Western painting techniques. Made as a hanging scroll to be used as an object of worship.

## Equestrian Kings of Europe (Important Cultural Asset)



Presumed to have been painted by a Japanese artist with some knowledge of Christianity, which was being introduced to Japan at that time, the figures are based on illustrations of knights that decorated a map made in Holland. Combines Western-style

expressions and the traditional Japanese folding screen.

## Namban Byobu by Naizen Kano

Made up of two sections: at the left a sailing ship is preparing to



leave a port in some foreign country and at the right the ship has arrived in Japan and the crew has landed. This work seems to express a longing for as yet unseen foreign lands, Naizen Kano (1570-1616) was an artist attached to the Toyotomi Clan and he excelled at this type of work.

Left wing of Namban Byobu  
(Important Cultural Asset)

## Portrait of Nobunaga Oda (Important Cultural Asset)



Nobunaga Oda (1534-1581), one of the great military commanders who helped unite Japan, also was an avid collector of Namban (southern European) products. Based on the year written on the painting, it is presumed to have been a portrait done to commemorate the first anniversary of his death.

## Map of the world "Byobu" (Important Cultural Asset)

A folding screen created sometime in the first half of the 17th



century. Produced as one part of a pair, the other being a folding screen depicting four cities in the world, one of which was Rome. Based on maps of cities and the world produced in the West, a Japanese artist has made these maps a decorative motif.

## Kokan Shiba (1747–1818)



He was a representative painter of Western-style art in the late Edo Period. In addition to painting in oils, he created Japan's first copper etchings.

## Small Map of Japan by Ino (western Japan)

This map was based on the first survey of Japan, done by Tadataka Ino. It was completed in 1821 and presented to the Tokugawa Shogunate. On this map, one of three that covered the entire country, although there is not much inland detail, the coastline is drawn with the precision of a modern map.



## The Prosperous Port in Kobe (Sadanobu Hasegawa II)



The bund in the Foreign Settlement shortly after the opening of the port (January 1, 1868). A rare view of bustling streets lined with foreign consulates and trading houses.

## Extension and Education

### Educational Room



Take a look corner: Videotapes include 'Ichinotani battle between the Genji and Heike clans', 'Taking a look at Kobe from the sky', etc. English versions are also available.

Hands-on corner: You can touch earthenware and clay images. There is a replica of a Dotaku (bell-shaped bronzes dating from the first centuries A.D.) which you can sound.

### Library

30,000 volumes featuring our four main studies: Namban and Kohmo Art, Kobe (local aspects), cultural exchange between East and West, and archaeology.

### Publications

Yearbook, "Museum Tayori" (newsletter), study reports, catalogs of Special Exhibitions, etc.

## Facilities

- Structure: Steel reinforced concrete
- 5F and B1 (5 floors above and one basement level)
- Building Site Area: 3,053.3 m<sup>2</sup>
- Total Floor Area: 10,073.1 m<sup>2</sup>
- Exhibition Area: 3,124.8 m<sup>2</sup>

Room #1	242.6 m <sup>2</sup>
Room #2	234.4 m <sup>2</sup>
Room #3	434.0 m <sup>2</sup>
Room #4	262.7 m <sup>2</sup>
Room #5	205.4 m <sup>2</sup>

Special Exhibit Room #1	489.5 m <sup>2</sup>
Special Exhibit Room #2	202.3 m <sup>2</sup>
Namban Art Room	503.5 m <sup>2</sup>
Gallery	200.0 m <sup>2</sup>
Exhibit Prepare Room	52.4 m <sup>2</sup>
Study Room	208.0 m <sup>2</sup>

Renovated from December, 1980 to March, 1982

## Museum Information

### Outline:

Based on the fundamental themes of "International Cultural Exchange" and "Contact between and Changes in Eastern and Western Cultures", the Museum mainly does the following activities:

- Permanent Exhibitions
- Namban & Komo Arts Exhibitions
- Old Maps Exhibitions
- Seasonal Exhibitions of other collections of the Museum
- Special Exhibitions
- Gallery (for works of art related to Kobe)
- Seminars and Film Shows, etc.
- Publication of museum magazine and reports

### Admission

Open: 10AM to 5PM (admission until 4:30PM)

Closed: Mondays, days immediately following national holidays, New Year holidays

Admission: Adults 200yen (group 160yen)  
Students 150yen (group 120yen)  
Children 100yen (group 70yen)

- Group: 30 people or more

### Museum Card

Good for any exhibition throughout the year!!

Adults	2,000yen
Students	1,500yen
Children	1,000yen

Apply for your card today at the information desk in the entrance hall.

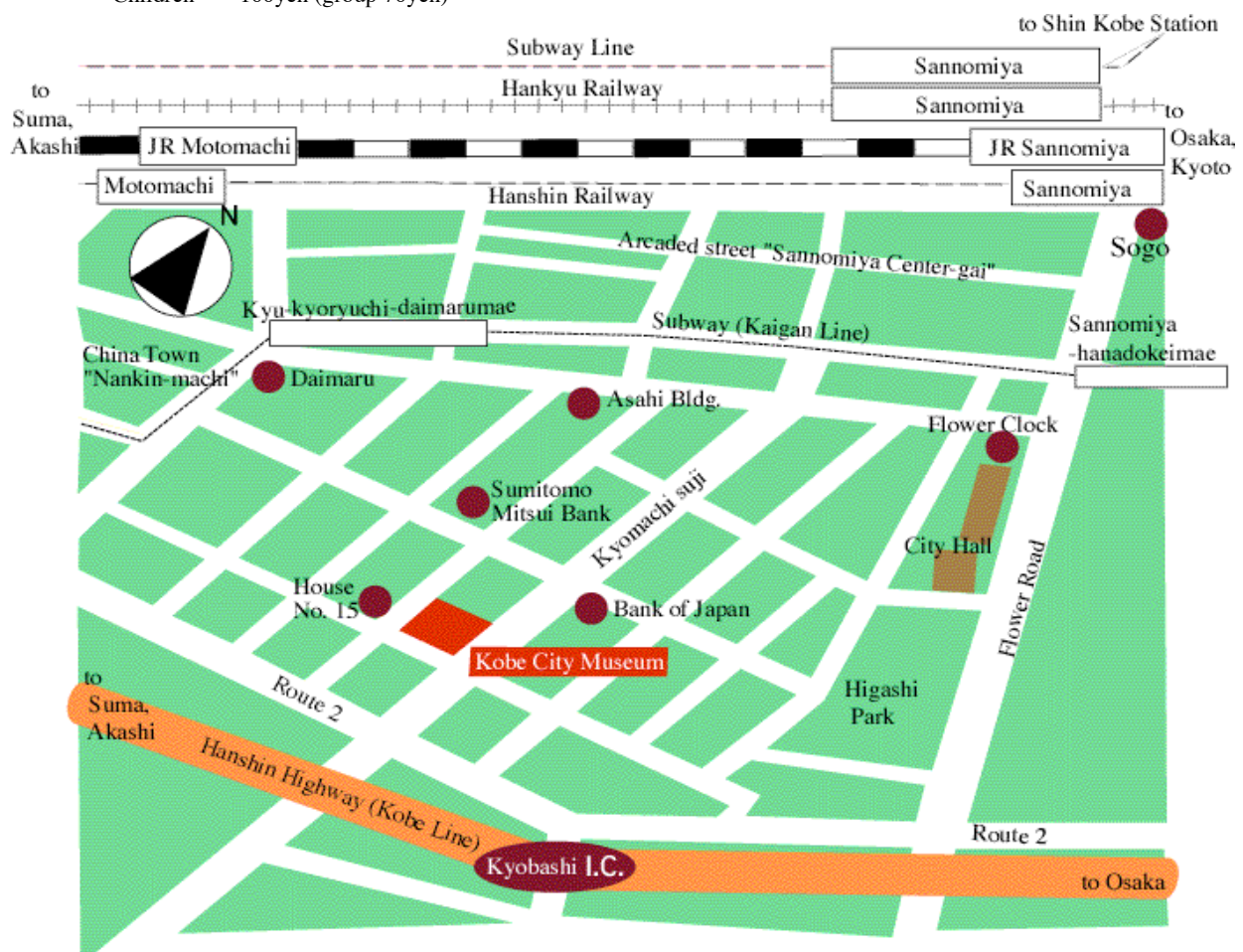
- Admission for special exhibitions is extra and may vary

### Visitors are kindly requested to:

- Be quiet and courteous
- Refrain from touching exhibit items (except in the Educational Room)
- Refrain from smoking, eating, or drinking except in places reserved for such purposes
- Refrain from taking photos

### How to get to Kobe City Museum

- 10 minutes by car from SHINKANSEN's Shin Kobe Station.
- 10 minutes walk southward from Sannomiya or Motomachi Station



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<http://www.city.kobe.jp/cityoffice/57/museum/> (Japanese only)

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