

4 *Verification of Minamata disease and discrimination*

【How the life of patients had changed after getting Minamata disease?】

In 1956, it was verified for the first time that unusual incidents were happening to people, too. The doctors in the hospital could not treat the patients effectually because they did not find out the cause of the disease. Eventually patients could not get sufficient treatment and died in pain.

At the beginning of the outbreak of uncertified disease, it was considered contagious and patients' houses were disinfected. Even in the hospital the patients were quarantined. Patients spent painful time of being discriminated and persecuted.

After people began to suspect fishes to be the cause of the disease, fishermen with Minamata disease and their family got to be poor financially.

They lost their income because they could not work, but they had to pay for the treatment in the hospital.

Even after the cause of the disease was identified to be non-contagious, they still suffered by the offensive behavior and prejudice of the citizens who had depended their life on Chisso.

The patients and other people are same citizens in Minamata city, but communication between those citizens had faded away and the bond also had broken.

In addition, not only the patients but also citizens of Minamata were discriminated by the people in other part of Japan. Because Minamata disease had been misunderstood as infectious, inheritable or a regional endemic disease. Some people could not get jobs because they were from Minamata. Some people could not marry because they were from Minamata.

And the tourists in the train or the buses shut the windows when they passed by Minamata. The citizens of Minamata must have felt sad. And felt that they were discriminated.

Thus they could not have been able to be proud that they had been from Minamata.