

5 *Experiment with cats to investigate the cause of Minamata disease*

【How did they investigate the cause of Minamata disease?】

As the grown of the number patients with an unknown sickness was recognized by the officials of Minamata city and Kumamoto prefecture, the medical school of Kumamoto University started to investigate the matter.

After examining the patients and analyzing drinking water and the soil, it developed that Minamata disease was not contagious but poisonous by eating the fished or the shellfishes from Minamata Bay.

There were many cats in the villages around Minamata Bay went mad to death.

Since 1956 Kumamoto University and Minamata health center started to conduct experiments with cats, feeding the fishes and shellfishes from Minamata Bay. In 1957, it developed that the symptoms of the cats on the experiments were same as that of the cats in the fishing villages. This experiment filled the big role to find out the cause of the disease, and government of Kumamoto prefecture announced not to fish or eats the fishes from Minamata Bay.

On the other hand, Chisso also conducted same experiments with cats and found out the cause of the disease. How ever it had kept on hiding the results and discharging poisonous water in to the sea until 1968.

