

7.WHAT COMPENSATION DO THE PATIENTS RECEIVE?



The signing of an agreement between the patients' associations and Chisso in 1996

Patients and Chisso concluded a compensation agreement in July 1973, based on the March 1973 court decision of the Minamata disease trial and the direct negotiations that took place afterwards. Under this agreement, one time consolation payments of between 16 million and 18 million yen were paid to certified patients. In addition, annuities, medical expenses, nursing costs, funeral expenses, hot spring treatment expenses, and the cost of acupuncture and moxibustion treatments are paid. Also, Chisso uses the interest from a reserve fund to pay diaper expenses, home help costs, condolence gifts, massage treatment expenses, and transportation costs to and from hospitals.

Moreover, for those who have not applied for certification but meet certain requirements such as experiencing loss of sensation in all four extremities and having eaten large amounts of fish and shellfish, Kumamoto and Kagoshima prefectures pay the medical expenses not covered by health insurance, and expenses for other medical treatment (17,200 to 23,500 yen per month as of November, 2000) through its Comprehensive Minamata Disease Treatment Project.

Based on the Final Settlement proposed by the National Government, those, whether they are alive or not, who meet certain requirements for having been affected by methyl mercury (except for certified Minamata disease victims) agreed with Chisso that they would not ask for further compensation in 1996, and received compensation payments of 2.6 million yen.