



Mitsubishi Materials, Chinese WWII slave workers reach deal

- 1) TOKYO (AP) — Mitsubishi Materials Corp., one of dozens of Japanese companies that used Chinese forced laborers during World War II, reached a settlement covering thousands of victims Wednesday that includes compensation and an apology.
- 2) The deal was signed in Beijing with three former workers representing the company's more than 3,000 Chinese victims of forced labor, Mitsubishi Materials said

in a statement.

3) The victims were among about 40,000 Chinese brought to Japan in the early 1940s as forced laborers to make up for a domestic labor shortage. Many died due to violence and malnutrition amid harsh treatment by the Japanese.

4) Under the settlement, Mitsubishi Materials will pay 100,000 yuan (\$15,000) to each of the Chinese victims and their families. The victims were forced to work at 10 coal mines operated by Mitsubishi Mining Corp., as Mitsubishi Materials was known at the time. (coal mine: 炭鉱)

5) Mitsubishi Materials said it would try to locate all of the victims. The company's payments would total 370 million yuan (\$56 million) if all of them come forward. (come forward: 名乗り出る)

6) Most hailed the settlement as a victory for their cause. (hail: 歓迎する)

7) "World War II ended 70 years ago. Our forced labor case today has finally come to a resolution. We have won this case. This is a big victory that merits a celebration," One of the victims, Yan Yucheng, 87, told reporters.

(merit: <賞罰・感謝・非難などに>値する)

8) Representatives of other ex-laborers, however, said they weren't convinced Mitsubishi Materials' apology was sincere, citing a desire by Japanese firms to ease widespread anti-Japan sentiment among Chinese, many of whom feel the country has yet to show true contrition for its invasion and wartime atrocities. (contrition: 悔恨、悔悟 atrocities: 残虐、非道、[atrocities]残虐行為)

9) "The company did it not for reconciliation, but to try to relieve the pressure on the Japanese government," said Kang Jian, a lawyer representing 60 former workers who filed a case against Mitsubishi Materials in a Chinese court.

10) Responding to the settlement, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying said Beijing would pay close attention to how Japan deals with such matters. "China urges Japan to adopt a responsible attitude and properly handle the relevant issue of history," Hua said at a daily briefing.

11) At the signing ceremony, held at a downtown Beijing hotel, Mitsubishi Materials "expressed its sincere apologies regarding its historical responsibility to the former laborers and the apologies were accepted by the three former laborers," the company's statement said. It promised to "continue to seek a comprehensive and permanent solution with all of its former laborers and their families."

12) Mitsubishi Materials also said it would construct memorials at the sites where the company's mines were located and organize memorial ceremonies.

13) The settlement comes two years after several groups representing the victims and their families filed a compensation lawsuit against Mitsubishi Materials. The sides negotiated a deal, though one of the groups, representing 37 plaintiffs, rejected the settlement that was finally reached, according to Japan's Kyodo News agency.

14) Japan's government has long insisted that all wartime compensation issues were settled under the postwar peace treaties, and that China waived its right to pursue compensation under the 1972 treaty with Japan that established diplomatic relations between Beijing and Tokyo. Lawsuits filed in Japan by Chinese and Korean victims of Japanese wartime aggression, including former forced laborers and sex slaves, had previously been rejected. (waive: を放棄する)

15) Japan's Foreign Ministry acknowledged the country's wartime use of Chinese forced laborers after wartime documents were found in the early 1990s.

16) The settlement announced Wednesday is the first ever that Mitsubishi Materials has reached with former forced laborers. At least two other Japanese construction companies — Kajima Corp. and Nishimatsu Co. — have taken similar steps to compensate smaller groups of victims.

17) Last year, Mitsubishi Materials apologized for its harsh treatment of former U.S. prisoners of war, who were also used by the company as forced laborers.

★Ice breaker for active discussion

1. Please describe your image about "forced labor".
2. What can you say about the compensation given to the victims?
3. What's your opinion about Chinese individuals bringing up the case despite the 1972 treaty?
4. What can you say about the ex-laborer's comments to the result of the case?
5. What do you think will be the effects of this case to the Japan-China relationship?
6. Make sentences using the following words: hail, merit, atrocity, contrition and waive.

三菱マテリアルは、日本での裁判に 2010 年まで全て勝訴しているが、「最高裁の助言を踏まえ総合的に判断した」としている。強制労働に関与した企業は現在も 20 数社存在し、今回の合意が同様の問題を抱える他社へ影響することが予想されるため、日本の産業界には波紋が広がっている。