

Russian Diplomat Attended the Memorial Service for the Siberian Detainees for the First Time

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A memorial ceremony for the victims of the detainment in the former Soviet Union that was ordered by Stalin, the ultimate leader of the former Soviet Union, was held on Aug. 23th at the cemetery at the Chidorigafuchi War Memorial in Chiyoda ward in Tokyo. It was exactly 70 years after the order was given. The detainment was unexpectedly imposed after WWII was over on former Japanese military men and some civilians .

This memorial ceremony began in 2003 and has been held every year. However, this was the first time a Russian diplomat was present. It is said that a lot of records regarding the Japanese detainees are still kept in Russia. Therefore, the Russian diplomat's presence gave high hope for receiving more cooperation to document what happened.

This ceremony was initiated by "Siberian Detainees Support Center" in Tokyo. Two hundred bereaved families were in attendance. Ms. Tomoko Matsushima (70), actress, who lost her father during his detainment in Siberia, spoke as a representative of those attended, " I wonder how much my father longed to come back to Japan. War should never happen again" and offered flowers.

Because this is the 70th year since the war ended, the Support Center asked the Russians for their presence. This resulted in the first ever attendance to such a Japanese ceremony by a Russian representative, Mr. Evgene, Mrtov(27). He offered flowers with the respect and condolence to the victims. He indicated the attendance deepened such thoughts.

Mr. Koichi Ikeda(94 from Toyonaka city in Osaka), a representative of the Siberian Detainees Support Center who was detained in Uzbekistan for three years commented, " The participation of a diplomat to the ceremony is an indication that Russians are seriously considering the Japanese Detainment. This is a good sign for more clarification of what really took place.