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Chapter 9

Requests for Ainu Policy Measures

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As we analyzed responses regarding policy proposals in this survey, I would like to present an outline of Ainu policies and measures that have been implemented in Hokkaido, and look back on policy proposals made by the Ainu themselves.

Changes in Ainu Policy and Related Measures in Hokkaido

In 1961, the Japanese government provided funding for Utari welfare measures for the first time in the Health and Welfare Minister's subsidies for facility improvement toward enhanced living conditions in response to strong demand from Ainu people and the Hokkaido government. As a result, the Hokkaido government was able to commence welfare measures including the construction of community halls (to function as hub facilities for Ainu language classes, cultural transmission activities, counseling on daily living and education, and regional activities in areas with Ainu residents), and communal bathhouses. In 1972, the Survey on the Hokkaido Utari Living Conditions was conducted to clarify the actual living conditions of the Ainu, and comprehensive Hokkaido Utari Welfare Measures were taken over a period of seven years from fiscal 1974 to 1980 based on the survey results. The Hokkaido government subsequently implemented living condition surveys every 7 years and executed four sets of welfare measures over a period of 28 years based on the outcomes.

The objectives of the first set of welfare measures were to promote the self-reliance of Ainu people and enhance their social and economic standing through the improvement of social environment and social welfare provisions, the promotion of stable employment, the enhancement of education and culture, and the advancement of production bases. There were three major policy areas: 1) district measures (improvement of living, employment, and welfare conditions; and the promotion of education and culture); 2) individual measures (housing loans and employment, education, and welfare measures); and 3) support for the development of relevant organizations. Since then, cultural promotion measures have been gradually enhanced. In the fourth set of welfare measures implemented from fiscal 1995 to 2001, the objectives were to improve the social and economic standing of the Ainu based on cultural promotion, educational improvement, enhancement of stability in daily life, industrial promotion, and the advancement of Ainu people's understanding of various issues. In particular, the promotion of Ainu culture and understanding of the Ainu were emphasized as part of efforts to advance comprehensive measures. Major policy measures included: 1) cultural promotion (cultural inheritance, promotion of investigative research); 2) educational improvement (enhancement of educational standards); 3) stability in daily life and industrial promotion; and 4) promotion of the understanding of Ainu people.

With the enactment of the Law for the Promotion of the Ainu Culture and for the Dissemination and Advocacy for the Traditions of the Ainu and the Ainu Culture in 1997, the term Utari in policy measures and other names was replaced by Ainu. It was also stipulated that measures to promote Ainu culture and the understanding of Ainu people (previously implemented through welfare policies) should be promoted in accordance with the Basic Plan to be formulated by the Hokkaido government based on the aforementioned law. Other welfare-related measures

for the improvement of living standards and the like were put together in the form of the Measures to Promote the Improvement of Ainu Living Standards, and were implemented from fiscal 2002 to 2008. These measures aimed to promote relevant approaches in a comprehensive and effective manner based on stable daily living, educational improvement, stable employment, industrial promotion, and the enhancement of organizational activities in order to improve the social and economic standing of Ainu people through further enhancement of their living standards.

In July 2007, the Study Committee of Measures for the Advancement of Ainu Living Standards was established under the leadership of former Hokkaido University President Mutsuo Nakamura. The committee, made up of Ainu people and experts, examined comprehensive measures for Ainu people and concluded that efforts to improve Ainu living standards should continue beyond fiscal 2009 due to disparities between the Ainu and non-Ainu citizens of Hokkaido. In response, the Hokkaido government decided to execute the second set of promotion measures from fiscal 2009. Concrete policies included the operation and maintenance of community halls; loans for money to live on, bathroom/tombstone improvements, and new housing construction; encouragement of advancement to high school, vocational school, and university; appointment of educational counselors on the history and culture of the Ainu; encouragement of public vocational training; subsidies to cover employment promotion and job-hunting expenses; agricultural, forestry, and fisheries measures, small- and medium-enterprise promotion measures (e.g., folkcraft exhibitions and technical guidance/training); and subsidies for the Ainu Association of Hokkaido. Some of these measures are implemented with subsidies from the national government.

The Hokkaido government also established the Basic Plan concerning Measures to Ensure the Promotion, etc. of Ainu Culture based on the Law for the Promotion of the Ainu Culture and for the Dissemination and Advocacy for the Traditions of the Ainu and the Ainu Culture in 1999. Specific programs under the plan included the operation of the Hokkaido Ainu Culture Research Center, surveys and preservation of Ainu folk cultural property, the implementation of cultural festivals to enhance understanding among Japanese people, training of Ainu language instructors, and transmission of Ainu culture.

Budgets for these Ainu-related measures in Hokkaido amounted to roughly 2.2 billion yen in fiscal 2004. However, due to financial issues faced by the Hokkaido government, this figure subsequently decreased by roughly 200 million yen annually, and stood at about 1.5 billion yen in fiscal 2008.

Policy Proposals by the Ainu

The Hokkaido Utari Welfare Measures in the initial stage focused on the improvement of welfare and living standards in the true sense as explained above. Against the backdrop of growth among indigenous people's movements around the world that originated in the 1970s, the Hokkaido Utari Association (now known as the Ainu Association of Hokkaido) adopted a draft law concerning the Ainu people (the Law for the Promotion of the Ainu Culture and for the Dissemination and Advocacy for the Traditions of the Ainu and the Ainu Culture) at a general meeting in 1984. The draft, which was stronger in terms of measures to advance the interests of the Ainu, included the draft policy goals outlined below:

- Elimination of discrimination
- Allocation of seats in the Diet (parliament) based on ethnicity
- Support for the education of Ainu children, introduction of Ainu language lessons
- Establishment of courses on Ainu culture, history, etc., at universities, and employment of Ainu teachers
- Special exceptions to university admission

- Promotion of cultural transmission
- Support for farm management and the securing of certain farm areas
- Granting of fishing rights
- Promotion of forestry, commerce, and industry
- Enhancement of employment opportunities
- Creation of an ethnic self-support fund
- Establishment of consultative bodies in the national and Hokkaido prefectural governments

Ainu Association of Hokkaido Executive Director Tadashi Kato made comments at the second meeting on September 17, 2008, of the Advisory Council for the future Ainu Policy (established in August of the same year) that attracted attention in relation to the second set of organized policy proposals by the Ainu. He maintained that the implementation of the Hokkaido Utari Welfare Measures and the Measures to Promote the Improvement of Ainu Living Standards did not necessarily improve the living standards of Ainu people. He also pointed out that the total amount of project funding had continued to decrease every year, and made the following eight policy proposals:

- Support the improvement of education for Ainu children
- Support for research on the Ainu, and ethnic education
- Return of the remains of Ainu people kept at universities and other institutions, and the performance of ceremonies related to their spirits
- Promotion of Ainu culture in a broader sense, including lifestyles and practices
- Use of land and resources as a foundation for cultural promotion
- Promotion of understanding among Japanese people through awareness-raising initiatives and education
- Reflection of Ainu people's views in political discourse and government policies
- Establishment of liaison and consultative bodies

Analysis of Responses

The policy proposals made by large numbers of respondents included the expansion of support for improving academic achievement (chosen by 51.0% of respondents), the creation of a discrimination-free society that respects human rights (50.2%), the expansion of employment measures (42.9%), and the introduction of Ainu language and culture in school education (32.7%).

Support for improving academic achievements has always ranked highly in organized policy proposals by Ainu people, as represented by the draft law concerning the Ainu people and Kato's comments. This survey clarified that ordinary Ainu people had strong demands for the same. Support for the education of Ainu people had been consistently provided in the form of scholarships, lump-sum payments for school enrollment and the like, or by loans through the Hokkaido Utari Welfare Measures and the Measures to Promote the Improvement of Ainu Living Standards. However, in light of the percentages of Ainu children going on to higher levels of education and the drop-out percentages found by this survey, as well as in consideration of policy proposals by the Ainu, it is apparent that further measures are necessary. As for advancement to university in particular, it should be kept in mind that since many Ainu people live in rural areas, support for tuition and lump-sum payments for school enrollment alone will not necessarily improve the percentage of those going on to universities located in urban areas such as Sapporo. The introduction of Ainu culture in school education has also been demanded consistently

through organized policy proposals.

It is noteworthy that more than half of the respondents demanded that discrimination be redressed. In the Hokkaido Ainu Living Conditions Survey conducted by the Hokkaido government in 2006, 72.3% of respondents replied that they had not experienced discrimination over the previous six to seven years, but this survey indicated that discrimination was still very much alive. This was also shown in answers to Question 12 in the survey, in which 44.1% of respondents said they did not like being Ainu because of their experience of being discriminated against. In the aforementioned policy proposals, the introduction of measures to redress discrimination was included in the opening of the draft law concerning the Ainu people. However, as the ability of questionnaire surveys to ascertain the actual state of discrimination is limited, we are currently waiting for the results of an interview survey conducted by the Hokkaido University Center for Ainu & Indigenous Studies in fiscal 2009.

All other policy proposals were also chosen by roughly 15% to over 20% of respondents, while those saying that no particular measures were necessary made up only 8.4%. It can therefore be said that Ainu people strongly shared the opinion that there is a need to introduce special policies for them.