HOKKAIDO UNIVERSITY

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Foreword

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Since its inception in 2007, the Center for Ainu & Indigenous Studies, Hokkaido University (CAIS) has endeavored to promote its basic policy of cooperation with the Ainu through a variety of research projects. These have included a 2008 survey on the living conditions of Ainu people as part of a social research project led by Toru Onai, a professor at both CAIS and the University's Faculty of Education. The survey aimed to shed light on living conditions and consciousness of Ainu from a sociological perspective covering education, employment, lifestyles, and consciousness. The local Hokkaido prefectural government had previously conducted a number of similar surveys, but a number of problems with these studies have been pointed out, including an insufficient sample size to allow proper assessment of the real situation of Ainu people. Given this background, the 2008 survey was implemented in consideration of such issues to provide a clearer understanding of actual Ainu conditions and allow the results to be reflected in future research programs and the Japanese government's Ainu policy. The survey was carried out with the full cooperation of the Hokkaido Utari Association (now known as the Ainu Association of Hokkaido), enabling the collection of large numbers of individual and household questionnaires.

This report presents the results of the 2008 Hokkaido Ainu Living Conditions Survey, which have already been made available in part as a preliminary report on the CAIS website. The survey results received a favorable response in the form of manifested citations in the final report submitted by the government's Expert Panel on Ainu Policy to the Chief Cabinet Secretary in July 2009. The present report includes analysis of unpublished data. The decision to publish it was made on the basis of the survey's social significance, although it includes some aspects that will require more in-depth analysis.

This report also has academic significance in addition to its social relevance. Conventionally, research on the Ainu has been conducted primarily in such fields as history, archaeology, and anthropology, and has tended to focus on past facts and traditional events. Hence, even discussions of the present-day Ainu have often been based on previous stereotypical images. This survey, unlike its predecessors, focused on the life and consciousness of present-day Ainu from a sociological viewpoint in a bid to clarify their characteristics. It represents an attempt to analyze the current state of affairs, which has hitherto been covered insufficiently in Ainu research, and is expected to help drive Ainu research forward.

Matters in this quantitative research that were deemed to require further investigation were supplemented with an interview survey in 2009, whose results will also be published in due course.

The questionnaire survey on which this report is based was conducted with the kind cooperation of many Ainu people and the full support of the Secretariat of the Ainu Association of Hokkaido. I would like to thank all survey respondents and the Secretariat staff of the Ainu Association of Hokkaido for their generous cooperation, without which the publication of this report would not have been possible.

In 2010, the Japanese Government established the Council on Policies for the Ainu People to give shape to its Ainu policies. Accordingly, accurate understanding of the current state of affairs of the Ainu and the problems they face are expected to assume increasing levels of importance. I hope this report will help to promote the development of policies related to the Ainu.