

# *The Fight Against Discrimination and Legal Mobilisation of Minority Groups in Japan.*

A Research Seminar presented by Ms Georgina Stevens (LLM)

Since the 1980's *gaiatsu*, or pressure from outside Japan, in the form of international human rights standards and their scrutinisation by human rights bodies at the United Nations has been an effective legal tool for both women and minority groups in Japan. While *gaiatsu* continues to be an important tool in the domestic mobilization against discrimination in Japan, minorities now pursue both a more diversified, and a more sophisticated approach to challenge existing discriminatory practices. Lobbying of human rights mechanisms at the United Nations has become more sophisticated, as different minority groups form networks and work together, rather than in opposition, to consolidate, condense and standardize submissions to treaty bodies and special rapporteurs, at the same time reflecting the systemic and institutional origins of the many different forms of discrimination that both "old" and "newcomer" minorities alike face.

This discussion will aim to provide an overview of some of the methods of legal and quasi-legal mobilization that have been employed by minority groups in Japan in recent years, in the fight against discrimination. It will attempt to evaluate the relative success or otherwise of these measures, not only in legal outcomes, but in the change these activities have brought about both in the identity and self awareness of minority groups themselves, and in the view that mainstream Japanese society and culture has of them.

Friday 27th April 2007

1:30 pm

Chancellery Building, Room 4.1

Murdoch University

All Welcome

Georgina is a graduate of Law and Japanese Studies (major in Japanese) at Murdoch University. She was admitted to practice as a Barrister and Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Western Australia before leaving this work in 2002 to continue her study of Ainu issues and indigenous legal issues at Hokkaido University, where she completed a Masters in Law in 2005. Whilst in Hokkaido Georgina worked both as a volunteer and paid translator for various organizations involved in the advocacy and promotion of minority and indigenous issues. In 2003, and again in 2005 Georgina completed internships with the Tokyo office of the Non-Governmental Organisation IMADR and she has gone to serve as an intern at IMADR's Geneva office in 2005, lobbying various United Nations Human Rights Bodies on behalf of Japanese minority groups. She continues to be a member of IMADR's Multiple Discrimination Project, advocating for the rights of minority women in Japan.