

Aborigines praise China treatment

PEKING (A.A.P.-Reuter) – A group of nine Australian aborigines now in Peking as guests of the Chinese said yesterday they were being treated like human beings "for the first time in our lives".

The group arrived in China for a month's visit a week ago.

As the group stood before a giant portrait of Chinese chairman Mao Tse-tung in Pekings' square at the Gate of Heavenly Peace, Terry Widders, a student teacher from Armidale, New South Wales, read a prepared statement saying that the warmth and friendship of the Chinese people had been "a tremendous inspiration to us."

The group is scheduled to leave Peking today for

inner Mongolia to study conditions among Mongolians, a national minority group in China.

Members of the group said they had been taking every opportunity during their stay to tell their Chinese hosts "about the plight of the Aboriginal people," in Australia.

The aborigines, who said they belonged to no political party, wore red and black badges bearing the words "Land Rights Now."

Some members of the group were dressed in blue cotton Chinese "Mao" suits.

Miss Cheryl Buchanan, an attractive 18-year-old student from Brisbane, who described herself as one of only two aboriginal university students in Queensland, said: "It's all so bloody marvellous. There's just no pressure on us. We are being treated as human beings for the first time in our lives."

"At home, we are treated like animals or inferior beings," she told reporters. Another member of the

group from Brisbane, Miss Lilla Watson, said. "This is my first trip out of Australia and it makes you realise what a racist country Australia is."

Miss Watson said: "One thing that impresses me most about China is that it's so clean."

Charles Dixon, of Sydney, who is leader of the delegation, said the object of their visit was a cultural exchange between the aboriginal people of Australia and the Chinese people.

"We are specially interested in national minority affairs and have been to a university here for minority peoples," Dixon said.

"The main difference between the national minorities in China and aborigines is that they are accepted here but we are not in Australia," he declared.

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