

1\*04JUN92.CHINA: DISSIDENT ALLOWED HOME WITH LI'S HELP.  
[SCMP] (60)

By WILLY WO-LAP LAM and DANIEL KWAN.

CHINESE Prime Minister Mr Li Peng has personally intervened to allow dissident journalist Ms Dai Qing to return to China to visit her relatives.

Ms Dai, 50, who is on a Nieman Fellowship at Harvard University in the United States, has been stranded in Hongkong since Saturday, when she was denied entry to China.

Mr Li's surprising decision was relayed to a local member of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, Mr Xu Simin, late yesterday afternoon.

"The State Council has notified the Ministry of Public Security to tell Air China to inform Dai Qing she can fly back whenever there is a seat," said the telegram from the State Council General Office, which was relayed to Mr Xu through the Hongkong branch of the New China News Agency (NCNA).

On Monday, Mr Xu, a publisher and China trader who is also a member of the Council of Advisers to China, had sent a telegram to Mr Li asking him to re-consider Ms Dai's case.

"I told Premier Li that while, as a sovereign country, China could turn away unwelcome foreigners, its door should always be open to its own citizens," Mr Xu said last night. "Moreover, I also stated that Ms Dai was a patriotic intellectual."

Ms Dai, who has a booking on an Air China flight for Beijing on Sunday, said she was happy the Chinese Government had reversed its decision.

She said she wanted to thank Mr Xu and human rights lobbyist Mr John Kamm, who had also been campaigning on her behalf.

However, Ms Dai, a former reporter for the national paper Guangming Daily, said Beijing's about-face would not change her.

"I will continue to speak my mind and carry out my professional duties in the two to three months that I will spend in China," she said. As of last night, however, the Chinese authorities had not indicated whether they would let another Harvard scholar, Ms Gong Xiaoxia, return home.

Ms Gong, who was briefly involved with pro-democracy activities in Guangzhou in the 1970s, has been stranded in Hongkong for the past week.

Ms Gong said last night she had written to the NCNA in Hongkong to state her case, but she had yet to receive a reply.

Mr Kamm, however, who has lobbied for both Ms Dai and Ms Gong, said he was optimistic the Chinese authorities would treat the two cases in the same way.

"By letting Dai and Gong return, Beijing will have taken a step forward (in human rights)," Mr Kamm said.

A source said last night the decision to bar Ms Dai from China was made by a security department without consultation with the other Chinese ministries.

"It is understood that units including the foreign ministry and the premier's office have a different opinion on the Dai case," the source

said.

Chinese sources in Hongkong said Mr Li had made the decision to improve the mainland's image in Hongkong and overseas.

In speeches earlier this year, both patriarch Mr Deng Xiaoping and Mr Li indicated foreign-based Chinese intellectuals were welcome to return to China even if they held views different from that of the Government.

Ms Dai last night said she was not worried that after returning to Beijing she would be kept under surveillance by police.

"I believe I am used to that kind of environment," she said, joking it would be tough for policemen to keep track of her activities.

"I pity them," she said, adding she might travel around the country to collect materials for her writing projects.

Ms Dai said she had written a report to be presented at the Earth Summit in Brazil on the detrimental environmental impact of the multi-billion yuan THREE GORGES Project.

When told that Mr Li, a keen backer of the project, would attend the Earth Summit and that her report might embarrass the premier, Ms Dai said: "Oh, really! I am surprised to hear about this."

Ms Dai had refused to talk to the press until yesterday.

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