

Peking frees writer

FROM REUTER
IN PEKING

DAI Qing, a dissident journalist jailed for ten months after the 1989 pro-democracy demonstrations, will fly to the United States next Sunday, having won a long battle for permission to leave China, a family member said yesterday.

Dai was given a passport on Monday, and will collect her US visa and final exit permit today, allowing her to take up a Nieman fellowship at Harvard University, the family member said. She missed a meeting with American officials last month when James Baker, the Secretary of State, was in Peking to discuss human rights. Dai, aged 50, vanished for four days and said afterwards she had been kidnapped by officials who held her at a seaside resort.

Her support for free speech has been a constant irritant to China's leaders. She was imprisoned and condemned as a "pawn of reactionary forces" in an



Freed speech: Dai Qing, who is to leave China

article in her own government-run newspaper, the *Guangming Daily*. In November she officially left her job at the paper, which had kept her on the payroll but banned her from writing

stories since 1989. She plans to sue it for the attack.

Dai has struggled hard to take up the Nieman award, offered in recognition of her defence of press freedom.