

**Chu Fallingstar, Simsbury, Conn.**  
**Stamp of Success**  
**By PETER ROTHFARB, Correspondent**

*As the new postmaster of Simsbury, Chu Fallingstar relies on her Buddhist practice for strength and courage.*

In 1982 Chu Huang arrived in the United States from Taiwan speaking no English. On June 26, 1998, she was sworn in as the postmaster of Simsbury, Conn.

At the swearing-in ceremony, the stage was bedecked with red, white and blue bunting. An honor guard stood at attention. Seated on stage were selectmen of the town, the head of the historical society, Congresswoman Nancy Johnson of Connecticut's Sixth Congressional District and Chu's hero, famed forensic scientist and now Director of Public Safety for Connecticut Henry Lee. Her husband, Blaise Fallingstar, sat by her side.

SGI New England Vice Region Leader Edward Pettit spoke at the ceremony and held the copy of Nichiren Daishonin's writings on which Chu placed her hand as she recited the oath of her position.

The hall was filled with friends, townsfolk and postal employees on a hot day that saw summer flowers in bloom everywhere in Simsbury. Ed Pettit told the audience that everyone wants to be around a person with fortune, and Chu was definitely a person of fortune.

Dr. Lee said that most people, when given a difficult task, decide that it is impossible; it can't be done. But when Chu is given a difficult task, she says, "Yes, it is impossible, but let's try to find a way to do it, anyway." He summarized his thoughts by saying that she should change her name from Fallingstar to "Risingstar."

Chu remembered the day she was first interviewed for a job in the post office, a clerk's position. Her interviewer asked her if she had a goal.

"Yes," she said. "Someday I want to be postmaster."

After the ceremony Chu reflected on the role her practice of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism played in her success story. "It gave me the strength and the courage to fight for justice," she said. "As a woman and an immigrant to the United States working in the post office, to become a candidate and to attain this position was either win or lose. That's how I approached my career, the same way I try to practice. That's how I got to be here today."

But is that never-say-die spirit a natural part of her character?

"No," Chu says. "I remember watching the movie about Tina Turner's life. In it she said, and you could feel from her, that nothing is impossible. I took that truly to my heart. Anything I want to accomplish through this Buddhism I can do. There are no limits. I thank Tina Turner for that inspiration. Through chanting Nam-myoho-renge-kyo and my experiences I began making goals and determinations for every year, every month, toward something I wanted to accomplish."

There must have been some bumps along the way. How did she deal with those?

"Being a manager is not an easy job," she says. "Many times I would leave work and head home with tears in my eyes. And then I would start chanting. One part of me was saying, 'I don't have to deal with this!' But through my daimoku another part of me was saying: 'I can do it. I can change this situation. I can change poison into medicine. All I need to do is make a stronger determination.' Instead of bringing donuts to work, I brought my Buddha nature to work. That helped me a lot. Also, understanding that every human being has a Buddha nature, I would work to bring that out of people. That helped me greatly to do my job."

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She is also responsible for diversity within the Postal Service in Connecticut. “We work on bringing recognition and understanding of different cultures to people,” Chu explains. “For example, being Chinese, I know people don’t understand our background and culture. That is my role. We have stamp dedications to bring recognition to people of many different cultural backgrounds. We try to make sure that the public understands the reasons behind the stamp.

“In our stamp education programs we link the culture to the stamp,” she says. “For example, on May 5 we had presentations about the history of Cinco de Mayo and Mexican culture. We also incorporate programs to make postal employees and management more aware of ethnic and cultural diversity. The objective is how we can all understand, appreciate, get the best out of and promote people of many different backgrounds in the Postal Service.”

What advice would Chu give to others who have dreams that seem far from their current reality yet really matter to them?

“Never give up,” she says with conviction. “Never give up.”

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