

PROFILE



Mr. Lu: ... “I took Chinese classes on Saturday mornings for 13 years, and for most of that time, I hated it. It was something my mom made me do, and I couldn’t understand why I had to spend my days at a Chinese cultural center while all my friends got to sleep in and watch Saturday morning cartoons.

Only as I got older did I realize the value of learning about my language and my heritage. When I was fourteen or so, my mother gave my sister and I the choice to quit Chinese classes or to continue taking them until we graduated from high school. I volunteered to continue while my sister quit.

...

Which is all a roundabout way of saying this: thanks, Mom, for making me go to Chinese school. I wish more second-generation Chinese American kids could speak Mandarin; at least so that folks like Chris Lu can go to China and actually hold a prolonged conversation with the Chinese premier when he gets a chance to meet him.”

Excerpt from a transcript published by the *Washington Post* of their conversation with Chris Lu, who, as Assistant to the President and Cabinet Secretary, is one of the most prominent Asian Americans in the White House.

About Chris Lu

Christopher P. Lu is Assistant to the President and Cabinet Secretary for United States President Barack Obama. Lu graduated from the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University and from Harvard Law School, where he was a classmate of Obama’s. He served as a litigation attorney for the Washington, D.C. firm Sidley Austin before taking his first political position as Deputy Chief Counsel for Representative Henry Waxman and the Democratic staff of the United States House Government Reform Committee. After serving briefly as an advisor on Senator John Kerry’s 2004 presidential campaign, Lu came to work in Barack Obama’s U.S. Senate office, where he served as legislative director and acting chief of staff. Following Obama’s successful 2008 campaign for presidency, Lu was appointed executive director of the Obama-Biden Transition Project. When Obama appointed Lu as Cabinet Secretary, *The New York Times* described him as “one of the highest-ranking Asian Americans in the Obama administration”.

Chris Lu was born on June 12, 1966 in New Jersey. In 1974, his family moved to the Fallsmead neighborhood of Rockville, Maryland, where he graduated from Thomas S. Wootton High School in 1984. Lu is the son of Eileen and Chien-Yang Lu, both of whom were born in Mainland China and lived in Taiwan until the 1950s when they emigrated to the United States to attend college. Lu’s grandfather, Wang Ren-yuan, was the Minister of Justice of the Republic of China from 1970 to 1976. Lu said he was heavily influenced by his father, who worked as an electrical engineer but loved literature and history; the two would read biographies of politicians and watch the evening news together.

Lu attended the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton University, where he was the senior news editor of the *Daily Princetonian*. Lu’s ambition for a political career developed at Princeton, particularly during his internship in the Capitol Hill office of Senator Charles Mathias. He graduated magna cum laude in 1988, after writing a senior thesis on press coverage of presidential campaigns. After graduating from Princeton, Lu attended Harvard Law School, where he was one of Barack Obama’s classmates from 1988 to 1991.