

**Jiang Benhu** (Fuyang, Zhejiang province, 1964), better known by his pseudonym, **Mai Jia**, is a figure almost as mysterious as the books he writes. Little is known about him, in fact, except that he worked for the Chinese secret services for seventeen years; has been the president of the Zhejiang Writers' Association since 2013; and, above all, is one of China's best-selling authors, the forerunner of Chinese espionage fiction and the creator of a unique genre that skilfully blends ingredients from spy stories, cryptography (the field he worked in for many long years), suspense, drama, history and metafiction. It took Mai Jia ten years to write *Decoded*, winner of China's most important literary honor, the Mao Dun Literature Prize. After going through seventeen editions with five million copies sold in China, the novel is set to be published in twenty countries, and there is even a film produced by 20th Century Fox in the works.