Hanchao Lu is Professor of History at the Georgia Institute of Technology and Director of the China Research Center in Atlanta. A specialist in socioeconomic history, his recent work has focused on everyday life and grassroots society in China’s turbulent modern era. He is the author of three award-winning books: *Beyond the Neon Lights*, *Street Criers*, and *The Birth of A Republic*, and he serves as editor-in-chief of the peer-reviewed journal, *Chinese Historical Review* and editor of a 16-volume series, *The Culture and Customs of Asia*.

This lecture looks at the various food-related metaphors that Mao used as a political instrument for numerous mass mobilizations and national campaigns during his reign. Although on the surface the people he ruled dutifully revered his “food language” as “supreme instructions,” they also manipulated them for their own purposes, not necessarily following the Chairman’s real intentions. In the end, the various political and social exercises centered on Mao’s penchant for certain foods reveal that Maoism, in spite of being dressed in Marxist and revolutionary apparel, was deeply rooted in Chinese culture.

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