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## Media Sheet

### One in a Billion

***One in a Billion: One Man's Remarkable Odyssey through Modern-Day China***

This powerful story immerses readers in the dramatic survival of one outspoken man, An Wei, who illuminates the souls of a billion ordinary Chinese citizens. A stubborn, hardworking peasant who has lived by his values and stood up for his convictions, he has succeeded against all odds in the authoritarian environment of

China. His perseverance and ability to confront adversity combine with the dramatic events and upheavals in China's modern history, inspiring a narrative that will keep readers enthralled.

“Combining lucid, concise descriptions of China's history with intimate details of peasant commune life culled from a decade's worth of interviews with An Wei, Pine presents an eye-opening portrait of how ordinary Chinese people can become driving forces for reform. Readers seeking to go beyond the headlines about China will learn much from this account.”

— **Publishers Weekly**

Like Edgar Snow in *Red Star Over China* in the 1930s, Nancy Pine has discovered a largely unknown Chinese figure in a remote village who encapsulates much of the extraordinary story of modern China. Snow found Mao Zedong. Now Pine gives us An Wei, a bright, ambitious child born to a peasant family in the same region. He and his family suffer through the traditional plagues of old China, drought and locusts among them. Then they must endure the new hardships inflicted by Mao, the grandiose building of communes, starvation during the Great Leap Forward, and the cruelties of the Cultural Revolution. In a modern twist, An Wei finds his own way forward by learning English and becoming a translator for visiting American dignitaries, among them, Snow's widow.

— **Fox Butterfield, Pulitzer Prize winner and author of *China: Alive in the Bitter Sea***

Through the life of an ordinary man in China, Pine tells an extraordinary saga of struggle, perseverance, fortitude, and joy. Her subject matter, Mr. An Wei, has not held high positions nor is he wealthy, but his work has affected many lives in China and the United States. He continues to bring the two peoples closer to each other despite their many political and ideological differences. His story will inspire others to stand up and persist in doing what's right.

— **Peter Chan, Brigham Young University**

Generalizations about China and its struggle for meaningful reform can be corrected with this work about the life of one man. An Wei has witnessed the most traumatic and important events of twentieth-century China and has become a visionary fighter for grassroots democracy at the village level. Nancy Pine's excellent book enables us to delve into the inner world of this modest yet effective survivor-reformer. After four decades of writing and teaching about China, I would recommend Pine's scrupulous research and vivid focus on An Wei to anyone interested in understanding the jagged landscape of change in China today.

— **Vera Schwarcz, Wesleyan University; author of *Colors of Veracity: A Quest for Truth in China, and Beyond***

In *One in a Billion* the complex history of a complex country unrolls with the ease of a deeply textured Chinese scroll. To read this book is to absorb Chinese history through one person's unforgettable life story.

— **Val Zavala, KCET award-winning journalist**

