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| 1. Record Nr. | UNINA9910783388903321 |
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| Titolo | A Tibetan revolutionary [[electronic resource]] : the political life and times of Bapa Phuntso Wangye / / Melvyn C. Goldstein, Dawei Sherap, and William R. Siebenschuh |
| Pubbl/distr/stampa | Berkeley, CA, : University of California Press, c 2004 |
| ISBN | 1-282-35875-8 9786612358753 0-520-94030-X 1-59734-956-9 |
| Descrizione fisica | 1 online resource (400 p.) |
| Altri autori (Persone) | SherapDawei <1922-> SiebenschuhWilliam R |
| Disciplina | 951/.505/092 B |
| Soggetti | HISTORY / Asia / General Tibet Autonomous Region (China) History Autonomy and independence movements Tibet Autonomous Region (China) Politics and government 1951- |
| Lingua di pubblicazione | Inglese |
| Formato | Materiale a stampa |
| Livello bibliografico | Monografia |
| Note generali | Description based upon print version of record. |
| Nota di bibliografia | Includes bibliographical references and index. |
| Nota di contenuto | Front matter -- Contents -- Illustrations -- Preface -- Acknowledgments -- Note on Romanization and Abbreviations -- Key Persons -- Introduction. A Brief Historical Context -- 1. Childhood in Batang -- 2. The Coup of Lobsang Thundrup -- 3. School Years -- 4. Planning Revolution -- 5. Returning to Kham -- 6. To Lhasa -- 7. The Indian Communist Party -- 8. On the Verge of Revolt -- 9. Escape to Tibet -- 10. From Lhasa to Yunnan -- 11. The Return to Batang -- 12. The Seventeen-Point Agreement -- 13. To Lhasa Again -- 14. With the PLA in Lhasa -- 15. A Year of Problems -- 16. An Interlude in Beijing -- 17. Beginning Reforms -- 18. Tension in Lhasa -- 19. Labeled a Local Nationalist -- 20. To Prison -- 21. Solitary Confinement -- 22. A Vow of Silence -- 23. Release from Prison -- 24. A New Struggle -- 25. Nationalities Policy -- Epilogue. A Comment by Phünwang -- Appendix A. Original Charter of the Eastern Tibet People's Autonomous Alliance |

Sommario/riassunto

This is the as-told-to political autobiography of Phüntso Wangye (Phünwang), one of the most important Tibetan revolutionary figures of the twentieth century. Phünwang began his activism in school, where he founded a secret Tibetan Communist Party. He was expelled in 1940, and for the next nine years he worked to organize a guerrilla uprising against the Chinese who controlled his homeland. In 1949, he merged his Tibetan Communist Party with Mao's Chinese Communist Party. He played an important role in the party's administrative organization in Lhasa and was the translator for the young Dalai Lama during his famous 1954-55 meetings with Mao Zedong. In the 1950's, Phünwang was the highest-ranking Tibetan official within the Communist Party in Tibet. Though he was fluent in Chinese, comfortable with Chinese culture, and devoted to socialism and the Communist Party, Phünwang's deep commitment to the welfare of Tibetans made him suspect to powerful Han colleagues. In 1958 he was secretly detained; three years later, he was imprisoned in solitary confinement in Beijing's equivalent of the Bastille for the next eighteen years. Informed by vivid firsthand accounts of the relations between the Dalai Lama, the Nationalist Chinese government, and the People's Republic of China, this absorbing chronicle illuminates one of the world's most tragic and dangerous ethnic conflicts at the same time that it relates the fascinating details of a stormy life spent in the quest for a new Tibet.
