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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.
