

Sonju

by Wondra Chang

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Also coming to Audible, read by Laurie Carter Rose.

After she defies the rigid, oppressive Confucian tradition of order and conformity, Sonju descends from an aristocratic upbringing to working at a men's club. In spite of social condemnations and personal tragedies, her determination to be her own person never wavers.

Sonju's life takes a turn when her mother marries her off to a man from a wealthy farming clan rather than allowing her to marry the man she loves. Set against the historical background of the humiliating Japanese occupation and the horrors of the Korean War, *Sonju* portrays one woman's journey to personal liberation.



Wondra Chang was born in South Korea and has lived in the U.S. since 1970. Her writing discipline began at age ten, writing five short stories a day under the tutelage of a writing teacher. She won first place in a province-wide in-person writing competition. She studied journalism at Ewha Womans University in Seoul, Korea. She currently lives in San Antonio, Texas, where she lives with her husband, Bernard Rauch.



WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING ABOUT *SONJU*:

A well-crafted tale of a person who forges ahead amid heartbreak and war.

—[Kirkus Starred Review](#)

This revealing, passionate account of a young woman's coming of age, achievement of maturity, and discovery of emancipation is written from the heart. More than merely a story of love and betrayal, loss and sacrifice, it also offers an allegory for the emergence of South Korea as a significant player in the game of nations. Sonju's "flowering," in a sense, her journey of self-discovery is watered by the tears of pain and the gut-wrenching experience as she is dragged almost physically from a primitive world of repressive tradition and subjugation, a prescribed life deeply rooted in antiquity into a bewildering world of rapidly evolving modernity and change. Her story is, in a way, Korea's story, and her pain, in so many ways, reflects Korea's pain as a nation divided by artificial lines and fiercely debated social and political convictions, as it struggles to protect its identity, its values.

—Clay Reynolds, author of *The Vigil*, *Agatite*, *Franklin's Crossing*, *Ars Poetica*, and *The Tentmaker*

Chang gifts us with an epic pulsing with life, fevered with longing, brimming with hope, and coursing with humanity. It's the kind of writing and storytelling that will settle into your heart, your soul, your very bones.

—Brian Petkash, author of *Mistakes by the Lake*

Wondra Chang offers an insightful exploration into post-WWII South Korean life through her portrayal of Yu Sonju, a miscast woman who comes of age at a time when her family and others of her class cling to a culture that suppresses women's dreams and ambitions. Chang, a former psychotherapist, takes us to a place in the world that has recently become more visible to Western audiences due to the success of South Korean films such as the award-winning *Parasite* and Cho Nam-Joo's bestselling novel, *Kim JiYoung, Born 1982*. Chang, however, in a story largely set in Seoul, provides a vivid picture of South Korea as it once was and a place well on its way to becoming the country we know today, rendered through the perspective of a woman who struggles to find a place for herself in her native land. Despite the suffering she endures, Sonju's story is one of triumph made possible through the relationships she develops with the women she meets along her journey, and eventual success as a writer and businesswoman in a male dominated world. Chang has written a deeply moving novel that will expand the worldview of readers from all backgrounds.

—Reggie Scott Young, author of *Yardbirds Squawking at the Moon*