

Chinese Embroidery

Yarong Wang

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Yarong Wang : Chinese Embroidery before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Chinese Embroidery:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. I am SHOCKED that this is the first review. Everyone at all interested in Chinese embroidery MUST get this book!!By Jane in MilwaukeeHonestly, this little book has more packed into it than the next four combined. This is not the embroidery of the emperors' silk clothing and high badges of honor but rather folk embroidery of the villages. Author Wang Yarong is an assistant professor in the Costumes Research section of the Institute of History within the Academy of Social Sciences in China. This is quite an excellent, pithy history of Chinese embroidery, considered one of the finest of the fine arts in China. The author goes back millennia, noting that records from the Qin Dynasty (221-206 B.C.) discuss embroidered robes and undergarments of sophisticated design, color and material. The characters for brocade embroidery, jin and xiu, have long been euphemisms for particularly beautiful things.This book is organized beautifully; after the interesting history is the catalogue of items, all shown in COLOR photos including Accessories, Designs on Clothes, Embroidered Household Articles, and Chinese Embroidery Designs. Many pages are taken up with a single item such as an elaborate pouch, a woman's "puttee" or belt, or hanging decorations. The embroidery designs might appear on many objects that call for beautiful embroidery so seeing many different dragons, tigers, birds, insects, fish, human and geometric designs lets us focus on the colors, shapes and stitches.The color photos of these sections are followed by bw diagrams and close-ups of stitches and techniques. Some types of stitches you'll know such as cross stitch, blanket stitch, stem and backstitch. But there are amazing knots, edgings and weavings that look very complicated. There is a 4-page Table of Primary

Stitches and Techniques listing the category, individual stitches in each category, other names of the stitches and the earliest specimen displaying same. For example, in the category of flat stitchwork, the layered short-straight stitch, also called the quiang, was found in the Tang Dynasty. Perhaps the most meaningful part of the book appears in the Appendices. The first is an essay, a story, really, by the author entitled "Embroidery in the Chaoyang District, Liaoning Province." The author relates going on a search in an outlying area to find an old blind woman who had a treasure trove of embroideries made from her own expert hands when young. As the old lady was explaining that she had given away the last of her treasures to her daughter, she grabbed her cane and insisted the author accompany her to her daughter's home in the next village. There, the lady persuaded her daughter to give a most fine pillow slip to the author, still highly cherished now. The other story is by Wulianghai Suhe telling of his grandmother's embroidery, also only done as a girl and young woman. Even though he was quite little, he recalls his grandmother explaining the proper way to embroider a Buddha image, a necessity for religious purposes. First, the woman must fast; then she sets up the frame in a quiet room and washes her hands and burns incense. With the extinguished incense stick, she would draw the image. There were strict rules regarding the color and style for the Buddha...but the outer scene and decoration called for greater creativity. Three gorgeous color photos of religious pictures accompany this tale. In the Postscript, the author provides further explanation of the love of embroidery and gives acknowledgement to the teachers and coworkers who helped write or inspire the book. Please get this book if you find it at a reasonable price. It strikes me as particularly authentic rather than "commercial" because it is the translation of a local expert and the subject matter is more humble embroideries rather than the royal courts. I love studying folk embroidery and to learn about that of China is particularly enjoyable. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Inspirational Treasure By Ou Mei-chih OUTSTANDING!!!! Color illustrations throughout show distinctive, beautiful examples of Chinese embroidery on clothes and household articles, as well as for specific types of design, namely, dragon, phoenix, flower, bird, insect, fish, animal, human figure and geometric. The stitch section toward the back of the book is clearly illustrated in black/white and well-written. Color Plates: 249!!! A real treasure!!!

Book by Wang, Yarong