



Book Review

Embroidered Narratives of Pahari Embroidery: Design Directory of Traditional Motifs
Dr Rohini Arora
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The book title, '**Embroidered Narratives of Pahari Embroidery: Design Directory of Traditional Motifs**' written by Dr Rohini Arora is a fresh insight to understand the intricate embroidery work of the Pahari region, which is not restricted to the present boundaries of Himachal Pradesh. This book is a landmark work in many ways; looking at the subject from a stitches point of view, analysing it with old specimens and presenting it with good line drawing work, innovative way of presentation. The design directory, good size of the book, and excellent quality of printing make the reading of a book enjoyable. Dr Arora has divided the research into four main chapters; 'Pahari Embroidery-Introduction', 'Double-faced embroidery', 'Single-faced embroidery' and the 'Design directory. With a good understanding of stitches, raw materials, and technical character of embroidery practised on a variety of utilitarian objects Dr Arora studied the old specimens from museum collections, besides archival literary works and filed work with artisans.

In the first chapter -the author has introduced Pahari Embroidery with clarity and the difference between Pahari embroidery and Chamba rumal. The latter is just one type of embroidery practised in the Pahari region embroidery work, which is practised in various centres; Chamba, Kangra, Basholi, Nurpur, Jammu, Haripur, Guler, Bilaspur, Salyali, Mandi, Kullu, Hoshiarpur etc. In most of the region, embroidery is practised on rumal (coverlet), costumes, hand fans, prayer bags, chaupar spreads and many more things. In the next chapter author had discussed 'double face



embroidery'. How these embroideries were practised especially on Chamba rumal and hand fans. While discussing the variety of stitches author mentioned the local terms also, which is helpful for both amateur and experts both kind of people. Folk and Classical are two types of embroidery explained with line drawing and with a picture of old specimens. Embroidery on any object depends on the right kind of selection of base fabric, embroidery threads, line drawing, subject, composition, and execution of stitches. The single-faced embroidery done on the choli has been studied in a similar method as double-faced embroidery. All types of stitches (filling, outline, finishing) etc. have been explained with good line drawing along with old specimens. The charts for showing group, subject, and classification communicate to the reader well. In the elaborate fourth chapter of the Design directory, Dr Arora has come up with the innovative method of using good, colourful line drawings for motifs (nature, human, floral, trees, deities, demon miscellaneous etc.) done in folk and classical style both, borders, composition, various subjects etc. This design directory has been developed so that the younger generation should not have any problem getting the original, good line work and should get motivated to work upon the most delicate, exclusive handiwork of the region.

In the end, there is an open canvas to paint is the way for artists who wish to do it either by brush or needle. The remarkable photography is done on these delicate fine muslin coverlets and has been published with the same passion, which gives the correct version of the raised effect of embroidery. Must read the book with a new way to understand the subject of Pahari embroidery.



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