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Dragons And Silk From The Forbidden City



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Synopsis

The Close-Up series is the first of its kind to give you a concise introduction to individual aspects of China and its people. Each topic is presented by experts in their fields who write with brevity and clarity for the intelligent reader. Some of the finest silk embroideries were made for the Imperial Court in the Forbidden City, where a mandarin in a dragon robe carried the power of the Emperor. Power, poetry, philosophies; all the symbols are explained and illustrated in use on actual garments in this book.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Teresa Coleman is a specialist in Chinese textiles and has lived in Hong Kong since 1982. Miss Coleman has collected textiles for many years and now owns an extensive collection of Chinese embroideries and costume accessories.

For a relatively small book of only 33 pages, this one is packed with all-color photos, many fill the page, of clothing, accessories, panels and wall hangings and, yes, two pairs of shoes for bound feet. The inside cover of the book has the color regional map of all China showing the main cities, rivers and Beijing, the Forbidden City of the Imperial Court. Then from the title page on, you're treated to glossy, very colorful pictures most of which depict court dress and decoration but also the informal dress men and women wore when not in their official capacity. I like reading about the 12

Symbols of Authority which revealed the Emperor is basically the center of the universe; the symbolism of the 8 Buddhist emblems of good fortune; the attributes of the 8 Immortals; the symbols of wealth and fortune; the fauna and flora used for symbols...and it's always handy to include a chronology of Chinese history including the various dynasties but actually starting in the Paleolithic Era. One thing I haven't seen before is the colors of the 9 "surknob" ranks--the jeweled finial atop the mandarin's cap. It always cracks me up to see among Chinese symbols the swastika. This is an ancient Chinese symbol of good luck and here, when combined with a bat, it means "may you have the greatest joy." It's so sad, the perversion of this innocuous and pretty design by the Nazis. Anyway, the photos are gorgeous and the author, Teresa Coleman, strikes me as truly as expert having studied painting and art, receiving a Master's degree in photography, amassing a large collection of Chinese Textiles and living in Hong Kong for the 16 years before she wrote this book in 1998. A little gem.

very cool, just as described

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