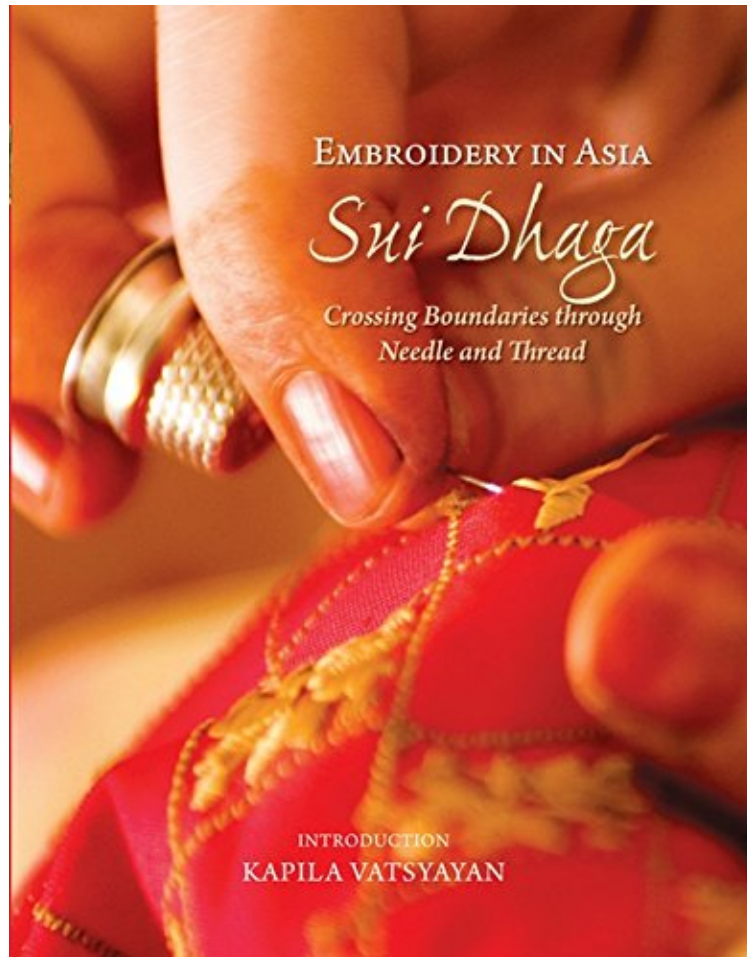


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The archaeological evidence with regard to embroidery can be traced back to many ancient civilisations, ranging from Mesopotamia, Egypt, India, China and Mexico. It bears testimony to the value and importance given to the art of 'embroidery', both for itself as well as an instrument of inter-and intra-cultural dialogue, even political diplomacy. Embroidered fabric adorned royalty. It was valued at par with music, dance and poetry, and was important enough to

be transmitted from one generation of women to next. Asia has been the home of many traditions of exquisite genres of embroideries which have a social context, an artistic form and a symbolic value. IIC-Asia Project has been, in its second phase, exploring the manner and method of transmission of knowledge within each unit and its transmission across borders. The IIC-Asia Project organised a programme in September 2005 on the theme Sui Dhaga: Crossing Boundaries through Needle and Thread, comprising a seminar, an exhibition and a craft demonstration-cum-workshop, in collaboration with the Crafts Council of India. Through these inter-locked events, attention was drawn to the role of women who have demonstrated a high degree of creativity. Through the humble and ordinary needle and thread, they established many bridges of communication between and amongst cultures. This volume comprises some of the essays presented at the seminar by participants ranging from Palestine, Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Bangladesh and India. These make explicit the rich tradition of embroidery in a social, economic and political context.

About the Author is a leading Indian scholar of classical Indian dance and Indian art and architecture. Vatsyayan received her M.A. from the University of Michigan and Ph.D. from the Banaras Hindu University. She was the founder-director of the Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (Indira Kalakendra) in Delhi. She has also served as secretary to the government of India and the Ministry of Education, department of Arts and Culture.