

2 (22s)

My favourite piece of clothing is in grey with a Spiderman print and made with textile. Coz I like that grey-colour, it's a dark shade of grey.

3 (37sec)

Actually I wanted to talk about a piece of intangible cloth. Because...every baby has a bib, but you'd never be able to remember what it looked like. A friend got pregnant recently, so I am getting her baby a bib, and it started my bib fantasy. (What colour is it in?) It's hard to tell, but let me put it this way - it's definitely a blank slate.

4 (5m12s)

Good morning Tung Pang, I would like to share thoughts about the design and fabric of my first qipao. Two elements are rarely seen on my outfits – patchwork, and silk. Why is that so? Because patchwork tends to turn clothing bed sheets-alike, so it's not my favourite and I've never worn such kind of design. And silk, it's about my personality. For those who know me, though I am a Royal descendant, I don't have the Royal elegance and composure. For me, silk has a very soft, gentle texture, and is certainly opposite with my personality. Well practically-speaking I am unable to carry it; I am not qualified to – it's way too elegant; the fabric will be torn the second I try to put it on. Also, I have never imagined myself in a qipao. Though I have always fancied the gracefulness, I feel myself not fit for this traditional clothing.

Despite all these, my very first qipao was actually patchwork in silk; it's almost surreal to me. But when I first saw it, the patterns caught my eyes – I mean the patch-making we just talked about, it's different from what I've imagined. It's very colourful, with floral prints in pastel colours, and very simple lines. The patchwork gave me a fresh and young feeling, instead of an old-fashioned one. A bit like In the Mood for Love, but not the kind of dated, boring patched-patterns in my mind. Perhaps all that I have seen before were mostly dark-coloured, hence my misunderstanding. If I have come across more patched-patterns, then I'll know what I thought was not true. Those pastel-coloured flowery patched-fabrics look really fresh, topped with silk to make a traditional qipao...this combination is very good, so I decided to try it on. Every qipao made by the designer is unique, the one and only. The second I put the qipao on, I giggled at the mirror, because I looked so pretty, haha! But I am shameless right? So I immediately bought it – as I wanted to try on a qipao since little, and I've always imagined how unfit I am for such elegant garment – contrastingly, it gave me a boost of confidence! It was when all my friends, including you, started to see me binge-buying, and wearing qipaos. Once I tried it on, felt that texture, patterns and cutting outlining my body, I found that I was actually able to carry it and this gave me confidence. I fell in love with this garment and sometimes even wear it to work – I want to turn it into daily wear.

Not sure if this is the story that you wanted. It just reminds me of my personal experience and I want to share it. Have a nice day! Bye.

5 (5m2s)

My name is "Sai Mui" (little sis'). My family couldn't stop calling me that even I have already reached my 70s. But from mid-age on, they all started to call me "Lo Sai" (the boss)....ha ha ha. I am very happy when being called "Lo Sai Lo Sai", though I've never had the chance to become one, ha ha ha!

Talking about patterns on the fabric, it's very special, and leaves a strong impression. I remember there was this piece of fabric from one of my elder sisters – it was in 1965, she brought it back from Japan when she had her honeymoon there. Wow! In those days, so few people would have the chance to visit Japan, everybody envied her, thinking how fancy and expensive Japanese products were. Rarely seen in those days too, mostly Japanese dolls, Japanese pearls...those were the popular things that sell. I was very little back then, thinking about my sister going to Japan, wow! I think she went for quite a long period, as in those days. Now we have 5-day trips by travel agencies, but she went there for more than 10 days. She told me that she went from Tokyo to Osaka, then Takarazuka, Nara, wow! So many places, all on Honshu though. She also rode on the bullet-train to Nikko, wow! It was a very special trip. I guess it cost her a lot. It was her honeymoon. Nobody in the family has ever flew on a plane but her. She treated us well and brought so much gifts back, like Japanese dolls; she bought me a pearl ring. I was still very young back then. The ring is still with me, the pearl colour didn't even wear off a bit, amazing, ha ha, though the design is a bit out-dated.

So, why did she bring me a piece of fabric from Japan? I have already forgotten when - I was very little and of course she wouldn't give it to me just like that. I think it happened because there was a trend of bespoke cheongsam, so people like to buy fabrics. My sister bought loads but she's unable to use them up, then when I grew up...I remember it seemed...the fabrics were kept for all these years so she passed them to me. That particular piece is really special, neither floral pattern nor those, you know, the kind of typical Mount Fuji prints. Instead, you can see some graphics of a Japanese child, at a Matsuri, festival kind of occasion, beating drums and dancing. The entire fabric is in beige and spilt with such graphics. The texture is not cotton...I guess because cotton-products was not yet popular at the time, so naturally cheongsams were not made with cotton fabrics, but more with silk, with prints in gold colour, which looks really nice. But the fabric is quite aged now. One day I took it out to have a look, and found all these mouldy traces on the faded fabric. My heart went instantly aching. I don't want to throw it away, but at the same time am afraid it will rot further, so I now use it to cover my coffee table, and all the mess can hide underneath it. I have been using it for the last 20 years, and still counting. The colour of the cloth, like I said just then, is beige, very comforting colour; it may seem repetitive with all those dancing doll prints, yet it's very special, and memorable.

7 (1m26s)

Granny used to work here; she's a weaver in the textile factory. I had a Barbie when I was little, and the doll's outfits were very small. While watching me give the doll makeovers with mere 3 or 4 pieces of clothing, Granny had a clever idea – she took some left-over fabrics from the factory, ones in pink with floral pattern that she used to tailor her own pyjamas. So she said to me, “Why don't I make your doll some clothes?” Then she made me and my Barbie the same set of pyjamas, with the same flowery pattern. This looks really fun. Granny sometimes would also tell me stories about her workin the factory. Well, those are her personal experience, like how people work day and night, and repeat the same procedures. It's good that she could use her skills in her daily life, even sewing outfits for her granddaughter's Barbie doll. So interesting, and so nice to just think about it.

(What fabric is it?) Very common-looking...like those light-weighted fabrics hanging up there. I am not quite sure what exactly it is; it's got flowery prints, in pink and white colours.

(Are you still keeping it?) It's from long time ago, I haven't kept it. It might be stored up somehow, but I have no idea where it is.

8 (1m54s)

Speaking of my memory of a piece of fabric, my first impression would be a piece of textile I bought in Kyoto, Japan. Though I can't remember what the piece of cloth actually looks like, I can try to describe it. The fabric is in red, like the big red disc on the Japanese national flag. While the prints are quite regular, ensembles made up of two or three flowers with an accompanying green leaf; each pattern is of moderate size. Let me describe a bit about the shape of these flowers: they look like sun-side-ups, in sky-blue or white colour – the blue flowers have white carpels, and vice versa. All the patterns are outlined in white, more or less like this.

I don't really know what's the actual use of this piece of fabric, a handkerchief maybe? But I have been using it for decoration. Remember at first, I used Blu Tack to stick the cloth onto the green wall in my London flat. Red on top of green, it gives in particular an energetic and vibrant feeling. For some time, I used it to decorate my studio, but perhaps coz the fabric is way too colourful with a sense of Japanese style, putting it next to my own artworks in some way disrupted my thinking process. More interestingly is, once I brought it home and some friends came over for dinner, they naturally used it as a table cloth, without a second thought. In hindsight, the piece of fabric has in fact demonstrated its functionality.

9 (1m46s)

We used to work in a spinning factory; East Asia wove really heavyweight threads with a combination of 2-4-1-1 roving pattern. Nan Fung wove threads with lighter weight, with roving patterns called 8-6-4-8. Guess what the 2-4-1-1 pattern is used for? It's for making wheels, a piece of thick cloth is inserted inside the Dunlop wheels. Also, some for making napkins. The threads are spun particularly

heavyweight, thick and resilient materials, even thicker than linen, and manufacturers like us were not common in Hong Kong. We now use paper napkins, but in the old days, people in the west threw away cloth napkins after use, very wasteful. The cloths had blue or red hemlines instead of plain white, it's quite common in Europe.

10 (49s)

There is a piece of clothing which is quite impressive, bought during my Thailand trip, I have worn many times since then, but I lost it in Kaohsiung when I travelled in Taiwan. I continued my trip, to Kenting and lots more places, and returned to Kaohsiung later. One day I met the hostel manager again; he had found that clothing and returned it to me. I had searched for it for a long time and he also searched in the hostel for a long time too but in vain. He should have been to all the places I visited just to look for it. He was so kind to remember even only a piece of clothing. It is a pure white coat printed with a gold statue of the Elephant God.

11 (1m12s)

Back in the 1970s, everybody were less well-off, and fabrics were expensive to get. Clothes were often worn until they're torn – but even so people still keep wearing it. So we started recycling those torn fabrics, cutting out the good parts, sewing them together to form new fabrics, using them to make new clothes, bed sheets or curtains. Patchwork fabrics – in Chinese it means “clothes collected from a hundred families” – some say it brings prosperity, and making bedding out of such fabric brings good luck to the family. I prefer green range as it looks quite nice. (What is the most memorable garment that you made out of these patched fabrics?) I only made blanket covers with it, coz we are a large family with eight members...sharing one bed. So I made a single mega-size quilt for all of us.

12 (48s)

Ah ma (grandma) made use of rags and fabric stripes, as our family worked in the factory so we got plenty of them. It was a rug, the circle-shaped fabrics were sewn together one by one, very colourful, very thick, laying on the floor in our home that we often saw. It was made mainly of fabric with every colour, maybe more red, purple and yellow and orange, so vibrant. What I feel about it was very smelly and dusty, coz these were all laid on the floor.

13 (1m)

I was in primary school, around 10 years old, and my brother was 5 or 6. He had used this cloth since he was a baby, like a baby-napkin kind of cloth. He used it day and night, took it to bed, used it to wipe things. He would bring it everywhere. One day, mom thought he grew up and was ready for primary school, and the cloth looked terribly old and stinky, so she threw it away. He ran out to the street crying, trying to retrieve it – this is unforgettable.

It's just a piece of white cotton gauze handkerchief, like those very soft ones for babies. (Any patterns?) Plain white, no patterns, just some stains coz it's dated.

14 (19s)

A towel blanket I used when I was small. It was red with pink in the middle. It was very soft that made you sleepy when holding it.

15 (1m6s)

That piece of cloth was originally a clothing, which I wore when I was small. This corner of its collar - I like this pendant; it calmed me when I carried it on my shoulder. I grabbed this corner when I went to bed. It was torn over the years. It had been washed but I didn't like to wash it, coz that smell would not be the same after washing. It was with me for over ten years. At that time I was very small, maybe two or four years old, in Shanghai. It is the colour of chocolate, really special, with no prints or patterns, just a very simple clothing, short-sleeved. I could carry it on my shoulders and touch it. When I was in America, at that time almost 14 years old, since then I didn't have it anymore.

17 (58s)

My mom uses it to cover the washing machine; the size just fits. I was very young... it was in the 1980s, and childlike patterns were very popular – you know, ice creams, cakes, very cartoonish prints. The cloth is in white with prints of colourful ice creams, like vanilla/strawberry ice cream, cheese cakes, and candies such as lollipops. Sometimes you can find this on the street.

Our dresses are lined with flowery patterns, some in yellow, some in turquoise. Little flowers with different colours give a soft and comfy feeling. Wearing it could give a child a motherly warmth.

18 (1m8s)

I was cleaning up these days and happened to find an apron, which doesn't belong to me but my son – he wore it at school for his craft classes. The apron bears his school badge and is quite new. He didn't want to throw it away. I guess if he sees it, it will remind him of his school days.

The apron has a colour of...dark blue, full-body style instead of half with a pocket. Actually I have never seen him wearing it, but I can imagine him looking very happy in it, ha ha ha!

(Has he ever talked to you about his wood craft class or happenings at school?)

Never, ha ha ha!

19 (1m24s)

It is a blanket, moderate thickness. I lived in North Point Estate when I was little. Grandpa and grandma covered me with that blanket when I fell asleep. The texture, smell, and look are really special, coz since I was little, normally speaking even though it is part of the bedding, it has the texture of a blanket. It's a very specific material, an entire fabric in white with patterns, the patterns are...I can remember the heart-shaped prints, in red; also some Christmas patterns. There is not any embroideries, but an entire piece of fabric with prints.

And my grandparents are actually still using this blanket. I got so excited discovering about this! Ha ha ha! Coz now that we have already moved out and North Point Estate was also demolished, but this object is still with us. Some parts might get a little fluffy, but it stays intact all through these years, not even wrinkled, precisely moderate thickness, ha ha ha!

20 (1m48s)

I was born in Guangzhou, primary school level but haven't graduated; came to Hong Kong when I was in primary 3. In those days we have "Little Red Guards"? Do you know what it is? Have you heard about "Red Guards"? The Red Guards were youths like your age. It was during the Cultural Revolution. The Little Red Guards all wore a red scarf, and we all went to our ancestors' graveyards to sweep their tombs – school children from all over China went to worship the revolutionary heroes. There's a major memorial graveyard in Guangzhou and we had to pay our respect to the heroes there every year. I remember in those days we had to buy fabrics with "fabric coupons", that restrict the amount of fabric each family could purchase – for example, we are a family of four, father, mother, my sister and I, the tickets indicate an estimation of how much fabric we need. We were all required to wear white shirts and red scarves back then, while pants were of your choice. I used to tell my mother, "mom, I was complained at school for not wearing a plain white shirt." Because my "white shirt" was actually checked with very fine lines. The teacher kept nagging me but I could never get a plain one before I came to Hong Kong. It has a lifetime impact on me, I thought...China is so-called full of natural and human resources, but we were even unable to obtain a piece of plain white fabric. Isn't it something we should rethink?

21 (1m15s)

My memories about fabrics would be coming across the blue-dye technique in Okinawa. Okinawa has many local handcrafts and this is something very interesting. Because for a piece of cloth...blue-dye uses a lot of natural plants, a mixture of these plants...the process involves 5 or 6 steps: dye once, dry up; then repeat. In general, it takes several hours to complete the whole process. Once the dyeing is over, the fabric will be passed to the tailor. Hawaiian shirts are very popular in Okinawa, and you can make one from your own-dyed fabric. Though it's sewn by a tailor, the fabric is dyed by your own hands, so it's unique. I find it very interesting. Also the scent of it...there's a fresh smell of plants. The colour fades every time I wear it and wash it. Since it's different depends on the wearer, the fabric becomes personalised.

23 (1m52s)

I think the fabric that... is most significant and that I can remember most clearly now is my Korean traditional dress. It is called "Hanbok" in Korean. I am actually not sure what it is made of, so maybe you guy can check... but almost very silky, rough silk. I think it is made by very special material. It has a lot of colours, and the one that I especially remember is the one that I wore when I was very young for big events,

such as my grand parents' birthdays. I remember there were different layers in the traditional dress. There was a top piece which was yellow and the bottom that was more pink and red. It was very colourful. I think it symbolises a lot of my childhood and my identity as a Korean person living in Hong Kong. I think I hold closely to me my Korean heritage through a piece of clothing like that. I think there are a lot of significances to me in that way.

The piece is in my family who are in Korea now and obviously I grew up there, it is something that I do not think I would ever throw away. It will probably be passed on to my children. And the things given that I think the style is very timeless, and of course, like traditional dress, it would never go out of fashion. And I think the material is also very good, quality wise, so it is something that can be wore throughout generation.

24 (1m54s)

It's denim in brown colour...I believe it's dyed before, it's a piece of persimmon-dyed denim. The colour is brownish-orange and uneven, being abandoned somewhere in the corner. I feel sad for it coz it does look nice, and the texture is relatively soft for denim. Time is reflected in the wear and tear and I like it. Why is it thrown away? This denim fabric stays in my mind. One day I wanted to create something, the image of that denim came in and became my inspiration.

I am currently working with textiles – collecting unwanted fabrics, sew them up and create a beautiful image, like these, which I call them “Fabric farming”. I think it's like farming, where you keep on doing what you do, adding stitches and threads onto the piece without knowing eventually you will “harvest”. This is a partial thing...it's like how you make good use of a piece of used material that was once shinningly beautiful, but ended up unwanted, leaving me to revitalise it. This is my story with fabrics.

25 (28s)

It's a white cloth made in Hong Kong. It has been used for long years and you can easily find holes in it, big and small ones. As said just now, some stains cannot be washed off, coz they have added up over the years. At first when I was young, I thought it was dirty and didn't feel like touching it; but as I grew up, I found that it is something homey. It gives a feeling of home. Ha ha!

26 (52s)

It's very colourful, a quilt patch-worked by a lot of different pieces of colourful fabric. The deepest memory of it is how beautiful it is, almost like a carrier of so many blessings from different people, because it's patched up by fabrics from everywhere. I think that piece of cloth was given to me when I was born, of which my family made it for me, so it means a lot. I kept using it till primary school years but stored it away as I grew older. It's still here now, preciously kept.

28 (1m50s)

Speaking about fabrics, I recall mom teaching me needlework when I was little. I wouldn't buy fabric to practise my needlework back then. Mom also didn't teach me any special stitching styles; she only showed me how to repair a torn, or how to make simple puppets. I particularly remember this piece of cloth, that originated from old clothing.....I was studying primary 2 or 3. It's an old dress in pink with Hello Kitty patterns, and some flowers in purple and green. I remember how mom taught me to recycle the dress into little bean bags, step by step – from cutting and sewing the bags, fetching rice grains from the rice bucket and putting it in, and then stitching the bag up. The bean bag was only the size of a palm, but I was so happy to have it. It's something that I successfully made myself. I felt proud of myself, and I kept playing with the stitches and hem. Also, it was when both mom and I had the most patience, teaching and learning.....it didn't happen again when I grow up. So now whenever I do needlework, I recall that dress and the fabric with Hello Kitty prints.

29 (10m21s)

Not sure whether you are still looking for stories, Tung Pang, sorry if I am late. It took me some time to think about it, because I like textiles very much, different kinds of materials – leathers from animals or plants, even synthetic fibers. It relates much to my works in the past, and clothes that I like wearing. Picking my brain for ideas, I find there's a kind of fabric I used to be familiar with, it's called Batik – Indonesian Batik in particular. Batik means wax-resist dyeing and it's a very ancient handcraft technique that can be found in many countries, such as Indonesia, Malaysia, India, Sri Lanka, even in Syria and some minor ethnic groups in China. Indonesian Batik is relatively more popular. To introduce some background, the island of Java in Indonesia is well known for their handcrafts, and their Batik embodies influences of different local cultures. Nowadays, some relatively fancy Batiks may incorporate silk fibers and use some special knitting methods. I got to know about Batik since little because my father is a Chinese-Indonesian. Every time he came back from Indonesia, or friends and relative came visit us in Hong Kong, they would bring Batik as gifts. I once received a very special piece of fabric with silk spun into it, giving it a very smooth texture. I have also received some other ones that was knitted in a special way, with specific relief and wrinkled patterns.

Talking about the ones that I am most familiar of, it would be all-cotton Batik. I have worn Batik lounge clothes and pajamas since little, but there was a time when I didn't like it as much, especially when I first lived abroad – I didn't want to look lame in front of my housemates. But when I saw it again back in Hong Kong, I could finally appreciate its difference with cotton fabrics. Perhaps because it was treated by the Batik technique...I have especially done some research around it, it is a kind of wax-resist dyeing, and such technique slightly stiffens the fabric. Simply put, as compare to cotton-tees and pajamas, Batik clothes are less soft and draggy, and it is a very airy materials that is suitable in particular for tropical regions like Indonesia.

Indonesians like to wear Batik at home or as pajamas. They will also use it as carpet. I have one at home as carpet now. Especially in summer, we like to cover the sofa with Batik, very comfortable on your skin.

Thinking about it now, I have a lot of different pieces of colourful Batiks since I was little. At some point I like geometry patterns since they look quick chic with simple colours and not as fancy. But the so-called simplicity in terms of Batik was actually already a combination of shapes, lined patterns and hemlines. One piece of cloth may have 6-7 colours.

I would like to describe to you a pattern; it's the print of a piece of cloth I am using as sofa cover at home now. There are some contrasting colours, mainly red, yellow and blue, but instead of very bright hues they are more of tones. Firstly, the centrepieces are two flowers in fan-shape, one in blue, the other in mustard yellow, a bit like chrysanthemum, except that it has way fewer petals. The biggest and most centred flower has only 20 odd petals, and the smaller ones only have a dozen. The flowers look very three-dimensional and well positioned. Some gradient colours can be seen on the stamens and stigma, for example that blue flower, you can see dark blue in the middle, spreading out and becoming light blue on the rim...it's not exactly gradient colour, perhaps we should say it's half-dark blue, half-light blue, with white dots on the top – more dots on the light-coloured side, fewer dots on the darker side – this is how you give it dimensions. No matter the flowers in mustard yellow or blue, they have leaves with same colour. The little flowers has a shade of English mustard, with very vibrant leaves like coniferous Christmas trees, even the sepals are in mustard colour. There are other smaller flowers as decoration, with 5 petals each, look a bit like sakura, and they resemble another small floral pattern that has a pastel-mustard colour. All the flowers are printed with white dots to emphasise their dimensions. The background is lined with wavy stripes in burgundy and salmon pink. You may see some connecting points where the salmon pink crosses. My guess is, the entire fabric is first dyed in burgundy, and the salmon pink wavy lines were hand drawn on top, that's why you can see some misconnected parts. But it is very detailed given the density; every line has only an average of 1- 1.2mm in between. Looking from afar, all you can see is a background blend with salmon pink and burgundy; the details can only reveal when you take a closer look. The entire cloth is lined with patterns we just went through, and people usually wear it as wrap dress instead of using it as sofa covers. You wrap it around your body as a dress, that's why there is a hemline in bright blue and dark brown, with even more detailed patterns. The wavy pattern is in bright blue with some simple, repeated designs like small flowers and leaves. The simple hemline in dark brown is 4 inches in width, with some lines in greenish mustard and cobalt blue, it's a maze of star-shaped flower patterns and some stems for decoration. I think the hemline looks really nice, but since we use it on our sofa, the hemline is unnoticed. All you can see are the big blue and yellow flowers in the middle, and the mustard tree leaves. So, that's about it for the story of this fabric, in case you need any more details, please feel free to leave me a message.

30 (3m45s)

“The 7-feet long fabric” Shaolian Su

My mother only bought home 7-feet long of fabric, and I regret it so much – why didn't I buy it myself.

I said, “Mother, 7 feet won't be enough, we need 8-feet of fabrics.”

She replied, “7 feet used to be enough. Have you grown taller?”

I didn't reply, or my mother naturally felt herself short.

As usual, she traced on the fabric with my old measurements, then slowly divided it with scissors.

My tears dropped, waah! She is cutting open me, put a needle through me, and sewed me up with threads...as I slowly grew into an adult.

12 March 1975

Talking about fabrics, we would definitely think about our mothers and grandmothers. I read this poem while studying at university. My tears rushed out and I cried so hard reading it, because my mom and I are very close.

Speaking about memories on fabrics and patterns, it makes me think about my grandmother. When I was little, our family was very poor, and granny used to wear very baggy clothes, what we call “ah-por clothes” (clothes for elderly ladies). In those days every “ah-por” had a certain rule for her styling: underclothes have to be flowery, and the garments must bear stash pockets – a very important feature. I remember how granny, when she was young, worked as a street hawker in Sham Shui Po, and she put small changes in those hidden pockets. But no matter how beautiful the underclothes is, her outer clothes have to be those...boring, pattern-less tops in black or grey, occasionally stripped. Granny had some very beautiful clothes, but I am not very sure, it was from a long time ago... It seemed all in black but different textures. I can vaguely recall that granny had a few dress gowns which she wore to banquets, those were made from Hakka silk. You know, Hakka silk is the finest material poor people could afford. It's a very airy material in black that dries up very quickly after washing. This is what granny used to wear.

32 (7m51)

Hello everyone, I would like to share a story about a very common-looking, small towel. The towel is around 24x30cm, made in cotton, checkered pattern. There's a wide dark red strip in the middle, and at the tail is a square pattern with alternate colours of red and white. I think this is what the towel looks like. This towel, in general, is usually used for cleaning in kitchen. Normally it won't be used for over a year, people will just replace it with a new one. It will be gone from the kitchen. But this towel is a little special and different – it went from the kitchen to the art studio at school. When it arrived at the studio, it was shabby, holed, and stiffened – far from what it used to be like.

What did I want to share about this particular towel? There was a story...after the towel came to the art studio for some time, we had a workshop that involved parents and during so, one of the parents indirectly offered to donate some towels to us. You can tell that they actually care about the school, the classes, but from another angle, it also means that they seem to think we are lacking resources – as reflected in the torn, sad-looking towels. I politely reaffirmed that we have enough towels, and that this old one shouldn't ‘retire from service’ just yet.

I think the life cycle of this towel hasn't come to an end yet. It started in the home economics room, having its second life in the art studio, I believe it still has a third function and role as little pieces of shredded cloth, we can use them to clean our painting utensils and glass.

Through sharing this story with you, I hope everybody can think about how we treat used objects, or unwanted things. The way we see things, sometimes it's only based on our own standards. In such resourceful urban living environment, it's easy for us to get rid of old things, torn things; while in fact, we have always hoped to rethink with our students how we should put these used materials and resources to better use.

I am glad the students didn't dislike this towel. This towel is actually a sample of a whole lot of towels in the art studio; it belongs to an entire bunch from the home economics classroom. In the art studio, we have plenty of used objects besides this towel, and students use them often. I want to use this story to share the city's happenings and its people, to rethink how we value things, to question if we have always been using a singular standard to decide the 'fate' of our belongings. Should we get rid of old and broken things that easily? Or keep discovering other functions of it? I think it is some food for thoughts (for our students). When they graduate and out in the society, they become the ones to make decisions upon the city's aging landscape and old buildings, or when they make other even more major decisions, perhaps they can think at a deeper level, instead of a singular and short-sighted perspective. I hope our students can think more on this.

Back to this towel, it still has its functions and roles. When it's hung dry after washing, the holes on it become something interesting to observe. What leaves an impression in my mind is, a blueprint tutorial recently conducted at school, which the tutors find the towel a fun and unique piece of object; they even made blueprints based on it. I admire their observation and respect for objects.

I hope this story may activate new thoughts. Next time pause to think when you are about to throw an old towel away; before it ends up in the bin, maybe it deserves a second life. That's it for my story.

33 (5m34s)

You can say I am wedded to fabrics. The very first piece of craft work I made in my fourth grade was a baby blue handbag for a doll. The satisfaction is well-remembered until today. Since then, I longed for using my mum's sewing machine, but my older sister insisted that I needed to reach a certain height to use it. I was furious, I wished I could have a way to increase my height in the blink of an eye. It was until secondary school that we had home economics lesson every other week, I was glad because I could attend my favourite needlework class from then on. Since I was young, my mum's job was to make kung-fu gowns. My brothers and sisters had to assist her for the work. After mum finished sewing the belt, we would use sharpened chopsticks to turn the belt inside out. During idle time, mum would teach me a thing or two on sewing. As my older sister studied needlework in her spare time, she would explain to me which parts I should focus in sewing while she was doing her homework at home. All the above helped me building up a solid foundation on needlework.

My classmates used to think that needlework class was annoying; those homework clothes could not be worn at all, but I tried my best to finish every piece of homework. The first needlework homework to kick off my secondary school life was to make an apron; it was still with me now. Other homework included making a bag,

culottes and suit trousers. I can still remember the excitement every time I went to fabrics market searching for the perfect fabrics for my homework. During secondary school days, I bought more fabrics than needed for my needlework homework, for designing and making my own clothing. We were down-and-out during my secondary school years, so I couldn't afford to buy school uniform from the supplier just as my classmates did. My mum had asked the lady next door to help us make our uniforms, but I thought the style didn't seem right. So, I started to make my own uniform dress. My classmate saw that I was doing the job neatly, so she paid me 20 dollars both for the cloth and for making her one. I still remembered she said, "Just keep the change."

I never told her that 20 dollars was just enough for the cloth, how come there would have anything left? Anyway, I finished this voluntary work with all my heart. After that, as young as me, could make the winter uniform – a sleeveless flannel dress, decently. Our school allowed us to choose the eighth subject on our own when we entered the fourth grade in secondary school, subjects such as home economics and art. I selected art as my first priority, which disappointed my home economics teacher, I supposed. The next year, I made for myself and junior fellows work gowns. Later, I worked for days on my two wedding evening dresses, and the first set of curtains for my newlywed home; during pregnancy, I didn't forget to make maternity clothing, crib bumpers and the like. After my first son was born, my husband rewarded me a pair of well-made tailor scissors for he knew I was into needlework. Though life is hectic, I manage to sneak a break from busy work, and design for myself clothing I like. Handmade clothes are always best fit and most pleasing. I am very fond of qipao (Chinese dress), recently I've received a paper pattern of qipao from my students' parents. In the past few days, I shopped in fabric shops in Sham Shui Po while it was still summer break. I came across a shop on Wong Chuk Street. The shopkeeper couple told me that the shop had seen better days, and at that time, a dozen or more staffs worked here, but these years the business is on the line. That's why they were overjoyed when they saw me entering their shop; they kept the conversation going, offered me a plantain, asked me to take pictures of my finished clothing and let them to have a look later. I readily agreed. Then I made a few qipao. Last Sunday I visited that shop again and showed her pictures of my qipao. She was absolutely delighted. I told my daughter this was the warmth and kindness of small shops.

I believe, for the rest of my life, my destiny with fabric will carry on.

34 (1m5s)

I had a blanket when I was little; it was pink in colour with plenty of snowmen. Each snowman was made up of two snowballs, with red or green dots to decorate. There were also some white dots, probably snowflakes. I have used this blanket for many years, since we were living in some temporary housing estate in Shatin, for about 5 to 6 years. Sometimes I would fondle one of the corners when I slept, and the corner got eroded. One day mum said she's replacing the blanket, as it no longer kept warm with the gradually thinning fabric – but I insisted to keep a corner of the blanket and made out of it a little cushion of 15x15cm. Then I grew up and moved

into a public housing flat. The cushion is still here with me on my bed now; I named it 'Snowhead'.

35 (2m16s)

The first thing that comes to my mind is a pillow I used when little. It's a baby's pillow, which I have used it for 11 years – I really don't know why. I stopped using the pillow when I was 11 or 12 years old. I can still remember the patterns on the pillow, it's a little pig heading its way out from the curtain; there are some lace on the hem and the pillow's in light pink, almost like nude colour.

A story of the pillow, well it doesn't seem a story to me – every time I couldn't sleep back then, this pillow helped me. Also, it made me think about how my father...when I couldn't fall asleep, he would tell me bedtime stories. But the 'story' was often a one-liner, like 'once upon a time there was a little piggy, it fell asleep'. Father had passed away, but the pillow was still at home. Previously I lived in Guangzhou, the pillow was there. Last time when I went back, I accidentally discovered it in a closet. Actually before that I have completely forgotten about its existence. It was a long time since I last went home, everything in there looked almost like artefacts on display, with a sense of sacredness and holiness. It made me feel as if an unseen glass cover is protecting the pillow.

36 (1m41s)

Talking about fabrics, or prints on a cloth, I actually wouldn't be reminded of clothing – my own clothing. But on second thought, exactly what kind of pattern and fabric can actually leave an impression in my mind? Probably a jacket owned by my late grandmother. It was this jacket that, when we were tidying her belongings, the instant I saw this jacket, I knew I want to keep it, and so it belongs to me now. Its patterns, I think, are very elegant. The jacket is navy blue in colour with prints of bamboo, in gold and yellow. If you wear it for a photoshoot, you will look very traditional Chinese, except for its uncommon colour combination. Grandma used to wear this jacket at home, very leisurely, so this is why I want to own it the second I saw it, because I always saw her in it at home. Also, once I felt cold and she lent me the jacket – I have worn it before, so I can remember.

37 (2m3s)

Hello Mr Lam Tung Pang! Here is my story:

I am Edith. This orange striped book is fully packed with memories of me and my husband Tommy during our dating days. Tommy and I, just like others who were born in the 1970s, seek for our loves, came across some people, loved-up but never flowered. Eventually and wonderfully, we met each other. It all came so naturally.

We've married for ten years now and have three children, the eldest child is turning to ten years old, the second eight years old, and the youngest two years old.

Because of your promotion, I recalled my long-forgotten memories. To our surprise, one of the pages marked the name of our daughter – Jane. It was amazing. Things changed over the past decade, people have gone, and new members joined our family. We had more laughs than tears over the years. If you want me to define what

'blessed' is, I would say with a grateful heart – holding a family together and living happily and peacefully is the most important thing, despite the fact that Hong Kong people have gradually smaller living spaces.

Mr Lam Tung Pang, thank you for giving me this opportunity. Best wishes, Edith.

38 (2m25s)

The fabric I am going to share with you, marked my story of growing up. Should I call it a 'fabric'? Um... it alters in size and shape, because it is a fabric knitted with wool yarn. So, let me call it a 'fabric'.

Let me briefly describe it. This so-called 'fabric' is mostly pink in colour. My mother gave it to me and she thought girls would like pink, so it was mostly pink, mixed with other colours such as yellow, orange, and a tint of baby blue and lavender. This so-called 'fabric' is actually... there is a local custom in my hometown: families have to make a piece of clothing for their young ones to ensure the children can grow up safe and sound. When I was a toddler, my mother knitted me a dress; when I grew bigger, the clothes didn't fit me anymore, my mother then removed the stitches of this so-called 'fabric' and transformed it into a vest. I had worn it for several winters. Then I grew up quickly and the clothes didn't fit me again; mother removed the stitches once more and turned it into a scarf, then it was kept until now. I grew up with this so-called 'fabric', as it marked the love and care my family has provided me, blessed me to grow up with peace and good fortune. Therefore, I have been cherishing this so-called 'fabric' and will keep it in good condition.

39 (54s)

When I was about three years old, my mother asked me to learn to sleep alone and on a single bed. She made me an A4 sized pillow. The pillowcase was pink in colour, salmon pink. It had a completed embroidered purple on it, and a half-done deer. Around the deer were some blue curves symbolising the clouds, also half-done too. I could understand those curves were clouds because I had attended drawing class. I asked my mother, "When would all these embroideries be completed?" She said later. Eventually I grew up and till now they were not yet completed. I didn't know where my father has put it, maybe it has been thrown away already.

40 (53s)

Let me think, sorry, is there one? Ya, ya, there is. The fabric is indigo dyed in the corners. It can make different patterns. It is said that the blue colour is good for health, because it is made with some kind of flower, so it is good to body when we put it on. It is a piece of cloth, like handkerchief but a bit bigger. Sometimes I would use it to wrap food, but most of the time I laid it at home, not much chance to use it. But I really like its pattern and colour. The pattern is somewhat in an explosive manner, how to say, radiating patterns, containing a lot of symbols.

41 (3m45s)

What I want to introduce is a piece of baby clothing. I have three younger sisters. Not long after my second sister was born, my mother said some of our relatives had pooled money to buy a baby clothing. How does it look like? It looks like a cotton-padded jacket in pink. To protect the baby's legs, head and hands, firstly it has a hat. For the bottom part, there is a piece of cloth in the legs' part which can be flipped up and zipped up, enough to cover the baby's neck. What makes it so special? Because when my sister grew up, the coming sisters would wear it too after they were born.

When my two youngest sisters were growing up, my second sister was already a bigger child. In the winter days when my second sister didn't have enough to wear or while the babies were sleeping, we would take turns to seize it. The winters were pretty chilly in the old days, we loved to wear it like a cotton-padded jacket. It is a baby clothing, and that is the essence of it. When we were grown-ups and our younger sisters were teenagers, the sleeves of the clothing were just about to reach our elbows, and the leg covers were just fit to pad our hips or waist. Back then in our house we had ceramic tile flooring, so it was cold when we sat on it during winter. We found that piece of clothing fitted just right to keep our hips warm. Also the hat could be zipped down and perfectly padded the back of our necks when putting it on. These made the reason why we four girls still wanted to own it in the winter days even though we had grown big.

We call this piece of clothing Da Ma Sha. What does this mean? The story goes like this: my mum was a tailor working in the factory. There was a tailors' jargon called Da Mar (big size) when talking about a large piece of easy-to-wear clothing. My mum said practitioners used to pronounce it as Da Ma instead of Da Mar. And about the word Sha, it means something easy to use. So, my mum named it Da Ma Sha, that's what we four call it.

Again, this piece of clothing is in pink. What's the pattern on it? As far as I can remember, this clothing had stains or creases or paints on it, because the four of us kept wearing it over the years. Sometimes it wasn't washed thoroughly enough, leaving marks on it, or the sitting position of the wearer on the floor, or her body shape, all these left marks and creases on the clothing. Though we four sisters had already entered into womanhood, and some of our clothes were not in this city anymore, every time we talked about this Da Ma Sha, we would recall who was responsible for those creases and unwashable grey stains. This clothing was not here anymore, it was reshaped only by our memories. That's it for my sharing, thank you.

42 (59s)

That fabric is white, it came from my school uniform. The fabric is... linen? What's the material usually used for school uniforms? It's just a simple white cloth. I went to the same school for my primary and secondary education, so the fabrics were exactly the same. With a pink necktie and belt, it is impressive because I have studied there for 13 years. It would make 15 years if kindergarten is counted too, also in that school. The uniform got yellowed, so one had to buy new ones every four

or five years, and we grew taller too. But even we changed to new dresses they were of the same style. Got yellowed due to sweating and time. Those were the days. It is now stored up in my wardrobe.

43 (40s)

I got a T-shirt when I was little, maybe 30 or 40 years ago! It was printed with a David Bowie, a yellow one. I have lost it somewhere; I really miss it. That's it. We talk about fabrics now so this clothing comes to my mind. At that time I was at my teens. I believe someone has bought it for me or got it somewhere. I have worn it so many times there were holes in it; I kept wearing it over the years, but in a house moving somehow it was gone.

44 (8m35s)

The first time I encounter a fabric that I remember is of the type, “香雲紗 (gambiered Canton gauze)”, that is Cantonese. I encountered it when I was about 4 to 8 years old. And of course I did not have words for it. My language and my thought were still developing at the time, but in a tactile sense, it was very different, very different from the experience from other fabric. I remember that was very smooth, very flat and compressed fabric. And I distinctly remember it was very very fragile also. When I picked it up, even like a small piece, it started to break and made a sound like it was a zipper. Very very interesting sound, I was very intruded by it. So I kept tearing it apart, I hope I did not do too much damage..... but I thought that was a kind of fun to play with. And then my grandma came and basically she was not mad at me. And it was..... maybe a little bit saddened, so I got to sense it and I did not continue to play with that. Anyway..... now, after 40 some years, I think about this, and of course the way I think about the fabric now and when I first encountered is vastly different. Basically when I first encountered it I did not consider my grandma's feeling about it. I did not think about what the meaning is..... what the meaning is to her. And from the perspective of today, I understand that the fabric is actually quite expensive, and not a lot of people could afford it at the time. It was a kind of aesthetic symbol for her time. Of course I later..... when we have TV in the early 1980s, there were like some TV series from Hong Kong, and those kind of clothing started to show up and implanted in my memory and made association..... kind of giving it more context, so I started to know in another way..... deliberate way that what the world looks like..... that my grandma had a past basically..... that in the sense of time started to zip into my mind. So..... like 40 years later, and I thought..... she tried to save the clothing, it meant something to her and..... she got to accept that the clothing is already degraded to such a point that it was very fragile, and seeing her grandson play with it and kind of ruin it. Maybe she accepted the fact that..... things do degrade and go away as they grow. So..... I get her maybe that is why she was not really mad at me.

And then the second time I thought about this since my first encounter was kind of strange is..... my mum works in the garment industry as a pattern maker. She makes patterns for designers. And she knows quite a bit about fabric. And one point

that she also tries to get her hand on some of these 香雲紗 fabric. And she told me how they were made and I found it pretty interesting. It turns out that the fabric is weaved by some plant strands. Maybe they break down a plant and take the fiber out of the plant and weave them into this 香雲紗, this kind of fabric. And what is more interesting about this is that they put this fabric in between two boards, like wood, and compress them and then sink them into a, like riverbed, or lake or something, for a period of time and then they take it out. Once it is taken out, it becomes very flat, very smooth and has a texture..... very very beautiful texture, and very soft texture. So it is a kind of, like silk really. But since you know, silk is very hard to come by, I think this..... maybe like a next best thing, suppose. So, anyway..... you know this thing has significant impact on me, enough impact for me to remember. I am glad that I remember it because my first encounter was so fresh and so memorable. It was also very exciting because when you were a child and discover something, every time when you discover is something new, never seen before. And for it to have a sense of history and it just recurs again, makes me think about it again..... it is kind of..... wonderful in a way. And I am glad that I have this memory.

45 (1m32s)

This fabric is in pastel green colour, gigantic enough to cover a king size bed fully. It is printed with some red flowers and green leaves. It evokes warmth and elegance, and soft to the touch. This fabric was bought in Xining, the capital city of Qinghai province in China. I just moved to that city back then and I needed to stay for a year, so I had to buy a bed sheet. I went to a fabric market, as soon as I saw this fabric that I liked instantly , and it felt so comfortable. After I bought it, I asked someone to tailor it to a bed cover. It was with me for a year's time. When I came back to Hong Kong, the size of the mattress was different, so I asked someone to resize it. Now, I can still feel the warmth it is bringing me.

46 (2m52s)

Probably because I am a Sagittarius, I am always the black sheep in the herd. School uniforms tend to look quite the same for everyone, so I would add a little something special to my school bag and hair accessories. I like to DIY, make something unique. I read books on cultures and customs, found out about patchwork fabrics, and it interested me in making myself a patched school bag. I found the traditions of patchworks very poetic – parents hope for the best of their children, good health and grow up happily, so they ask from friends and neighbours shreds of fabrics, patch them up to become colourful clothes. It's a very warm meaning behind. Once I wanted to own a piece of patched fabric to make a school bag out of it, I started asking around for fabric pieces, but found it's actually quite difficult as such practice is not common in Hong Kong. I can possibly ask people to just cut their clothes for the fabrics, so I came to Yen Chow Street hawker bazaar, buying cloths for patch-making. I can still remember, it was very hot that day, and upon arriving I was told that a certain internationally renowned fashion designer was doing his

material research in there, so the entire mart was close for his private view! What a day!

I got very disappointed for being unable to buy any fabrics, and ended up strolling around Sham Shui Po, had a bowl of 'cart noodles', then randomly walked into a flour store – there's such kind of store in those days. I found those large flour sacks look quite nice, so I asked the shop owner for 2 new ones. I can't remember what was printed on the sacks, like some brands names such as The Golden Rooster, The Flying Horse, or The Double Tigers – I remember the 2 tiger prints. I made a school bag and a pillow case from the sacks.

Later on, I met an old gentleman from Taiwan. He told me that Taiwan was economically very weak during wartime, and people were so poor that they even had to pawn their quilts. The Church would give out flour and oil to citizens. Once they finished the flour, what's left was the large sack – and of course they wouldn't let it go to waste. Guess what they recycle the fabrics for? They turned the sack into underclothes. This sounds very creative to me. The gentleman also warned me to be careful with selecting the flour sack as they are made with cheap linen instead of pure cotton –underpants in cheap linen hurts your skin. This is so funny.

47 (4m43s)

It was a fabric made together with a bereaved friend. The original plan was to make something close-fitting, a fabric that let him cherished the memory of his deceased mother. I weaved with him. He used a lot of fabric material from his mother's clothes – torn the fabrics and remade it by stitching. The fabric, should we talk about before or after the remake? Before the remake, as his mother was of great age, you can imagine most of the fabrics were printed linen from decades earlier, floral patterns and geometric textures of different colours, and had a base colour similar to those of the floral patterns. He had chosen some clothes, and one of them was quite grand. He mentioned that his mother only wear it on big events. That one distinct from the others. It had contrasting colours, red on a brown base, printed with a huge floral pattern surrounded by a vast number of small flowers decorated with green leaves. It seemed complicated to distinguish where the pattern began, they were perfectly fused together as if the clothing was made from a piece of painting.

At that time, we needed to tear the clothes to pieces. I asked him, "Is that alright? This clothing was such a treasure to your mother who chose it as the banquet dress." He answered, "Okay, it's time for me to learn to let it go." We ripped it, and remade into a new piece of fabric. He seemed to be relaxed while he sat down and sewn. He picked up every colour in front of him, red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet, brown, black, white, every colour, even lace and neon pink. He weaved with these striped fabrics together with his mother's belongings. When it was completed, I could see that the fabric was mostly in pink blended with striped floral patterns. The last step was to surround the fabric with pink and a bit of green and a printed fabric, combining into an album cover. The album stores his memories with his mother.

This project aimed to help the bereaved, through the action of tearing the fabrics, to reweave and reorganise their feelings. Feelings such as grieve, unable to let go, regret... were often seen, mostly would be unable to let go and regret, these could

be healed through this action. They would know, 'Oh, I can do something for my dad and mum!' This may make them feel relieved.

48 (1m19s)

I could best remember the fabrics....there's a practice of organising O Camp (Orientation Camp) in local universities, and I belonged to the Yellow team, where everyone wore clothes in yellow. Our team had an idea to DIY our own team shirts, and the easiest way was...is it called dyeing? The colours are in blocks, first we twisted and tied the tee shirts into knots, then we soaked it in yellow dye solution. When the process's done, we untied the shirts and each one has a unique pattern. This is one of the more special impressions I have on fabrics.

The tees were originally in white, they were dyed into yellow absorbing the colour solution. Since we were the Yellow team, so we thought why not make the shirts more special with different patterns in yellow. The patterns were made entirely depending on how you twisted and tied your shirt. Some of us twisted a lot, some tied many knots, some did flowery patterns; nobody's the same; everyone's special. (Tie-dye, the technique is called tie-dye.) Oh yes! Tie-dye! So this is my memory, the most memorable piece of fabric I had.

49 (1m8s)

I started ballet dancing when I was little, and when I grew up I got to become a ballet teacher. Once while I was traveling – hope my memory serves me right, I was in Japan, and I saw a very fine piece of fabric, with beautiful prints of ballet dancers doing different movements. The fabric is in black while the ballet dancers shine on top – the prints are in glitter, all in different forms and postures. I wanted to buy it when I saw it. It reminded me of my time during ballet lessons or the different moves I taught my students. Anyhow, I love anything that has a ballet element, and fabrics with ballet prints are exceptionally rare. I bought this piece of fabric to make some shoe bags, or cropped out the patterns and stuck onto plain-coloured bags. This trip to Japan was unforgettable, all because of ballet.

50 (2m17s)

In my secondary school years, home economics and needlework were compulsory for female students. Our first needlework classwork was to make ourselves an apron, which we would use in home economics cookery class. We could only use gingham for our aprons. I thought, all girls look the same, checked in green and white, so outdated. It was a time when such outdated checkered pattern being really commonplace at home or daily lives. For example, I still remember the plastic tablecloth at home, it was also checkered; also the red wrapping paper we use for the Chinese New Year cookie gift boxes.....so I thought checker is a really old-fashioned pattern.

It's almost a destiny that what you don't like the most will keep recurring in your life. Then I started working at the TV station as a director. Because of the camera's frequency, narrow stripes or tiny checkers on the screen will make you feel dizzy. This is a major thing in TV production, and we usually would ask the talents or guests

to change into another outfit, or add a jacket to cover the pattern. That's why I always think that checkered fabric and I are predeterminedly unmatched. But what's interesting is, I never like wearing clothes with huge patterns or floral prints, and then recently I figured that I have quite a number of checkered patterned clothes apart from narrow striped ones. So.....life is very funny, whatever you don't like the most will follow you everywhere.

51 (5m5s)

When I was little, I often found a lot of beautiful printed fabrics in my grandma's place. I can still recall, some were in apple green, scattered with flowers in pink, baby blue and coral orange. Some were pretty abstract like the Chinese ink splash, pouring bright red, bright yellow and all sorts of colours on the fabric and mixing hastily. I still remember there was one of purple-greyish colour, the patterns on it were big and small squares that seemed to be drawn with unrestrained brushes. Grandma was somehow beauty conscious, and she loved making clothes and knew how to make clothes for her children. For long years, she had been tailoring clothes to make ends meet. By the time when I was a kid, grandma didn't tailor clothes for a living anymore, but she would still make clothes and bags for her family. Though beautifully printed fabrics were grandma's favourite, she would still allow her grandchildren to play with them generously. At that time I was happy to cut her fabrics to make clothes and dresses for my dolls, and also bed sheets and handbags.

There was only one fabric which was well-kept in the wardrobe. It was laid inside a plastic bag, wrapped with thin paper, put in the dark. I just managed to take a quick glance at the bag while grandma was tidying up the wardrobe. I was curious and unwrapped it. This piece of fabric truly distinct from those grandma usually used. It should be printed silk in dark turquoise colour. That colour was amazing. Soft and bright, a gentle green colour, not at all dazzling; the patterns were orchids of coin size, embroidered with pale green threads. Grandma said, it would be used for making qipao (Chinese dress), for attending big, big events. Then she repacked the fabric with great care. Her cautiousness made me itching to see and touch it once more. I imagined the fabric had a colour of the garden deep in the night, so mysterious, so unreachable. Every time when a beam of moonlight shone, you could catch a glimpse of the few orchids in the garden corner. I longed to see the finished product of this fabric. Later on, as my cousins grew more and more, and my grandpa got sick, grandma was rarely seen sitting by the sewing machine. After her old partner passed away, grandma moved to Taiwan to live with my auntie, it seemed that no one has ever remembered there was such a piece of fabric.

Time flies and it happened one day while I was cleaning up my house, I found this fabric again. It was too bad that after several decades, mildew has ruined the fabric. It was obvious that it couldn't be used for making qipao anymore. But my papa didn't let it go to waste, so he used it to make pencil case, water bottle bag, and combining other grandma's printed fabrics to make a storage bag. Usually, I and papa would try to search for the origin of the fabrics: when did grandma buy it? For what purpose? Papa had a good memory; most of the time he could remember when and which fabric grandma had bought. For those he couldn't tell, we would

ask my uncles and aunties if they had any idea about its origin. To our surprise, none of us knew when grandma had bought that dark turquoise silk fabric. Papa said, such a cloth was quite costly at that time, grandma was a thrifty person, so it's unbelievable that she would spend on such a fabric. As no one could dig out anything about it, papa guessed she had brought it with her when she fled to Hong Kong to escape the war in mainland China during the 1950s. Maybe that was what great-grandma left to her. After grandma had left her hometown, she had never seen her mother again, this fabric was the only item in memory of her mother. This could explain why grandma had handle it with such a great care over the years. But I never dare to ask grandma the story behind this fabric. She told me everything about her past, how she had met grandpa, how to handle a romantic relationship, she told me all. Sometimes I thought, she had gone through wars, left her hometown and all kinds of loss in her life, if she chose not to mention it again, then I don't want to ask anything about this cloth. Sometimes, maybe 'cannot remember' is not such a bad thing.

52 (51s)

The Minnie doll made in flannel forms the memory of my childhood family. When I was in primary school, my mother brought me Minnie from the Disneyland in the US; it then became my bedside doll. The flannel Minnie was so soft and I used to hug it to sleep; it soothed me every night. However when I grew up, and also Minnie was washed for a few times, it went a bit old and tiny fuzz balls grew out of the once smooth flannel surface. It looked quite aged and felt rough. But even so, it is still at my bedside as my guardian angel, accompanying me to sleep in place of my mother.

53 (1m9s)

Once I wanted to make clothes for myself. Thinking about it, then I went to do some research. At that time Chinese suits were very popular. I was only a teenager, so I didn't go for a Western suit. I bought some denim fabrics and took it to the tailor, also brought him some samples and told him that I want to make a quasi-Chinese suit. (With denim fabric?) Yes, I won't forget that. (When was that?) I was 20 years old. (And now you are...) It was 40 years ago. (Denim Chinese suit?) I put it on and everybody said I look handsome. It was uncommon, right? (Is the suit still here?) No, it was a long time ago. I didn't know where it ended up. I moved a few times...and it won't fit anymore, my figure changed a lot. I forgot whether I got the denim fabric from someone...all forgotten. Anyway there was this denim fabric and it made me think about making something out of it, and that's what I made.

54 (4m4s)

Talking about fabrics, it reminds me of my days during secondary two. I needed to make a men's vest. Why was it memorable? Because I didn't like both the home economics class and our subject teacher. And I was too young to like cooking and needlework, or anything about housekeeping. I still don't like it doing housework, but I cook more when I grow up. Then I thought, what kind of vest I want? Since I have never made one before, I have no concept of how to mix and match. I guess

checkered fabrics would be the safest option, so, I went for it. People usually go to the Chuen Lung Street to purchase fabrics – it's a street stalls market called Hau Tei Square. I grew up in Tsuen Wan, and would go to Hau Tei Square for all the textile items such as accessories, fabrics, vests, undershirts, socks, towels, etc. The market was divided into cubes of stalls managed by hawkers, who sell daily necessities. It's very hot inside.

I looked for fabrics at the market and bought myself some dark coloured ones, like brown, dark green, grey and deep blue, with checker prints of various sizes. They wouldn't go wrong coming together; and I thought this look the best, so I matched them this way. I bought 4 or 5 pieces of fabrics like this for the men's vest. I was actually quite troubled back then, because I didn't like doing needlework, so there was a lot of trial and errors – I kept stitching improperly, couldn't even sew a straight line and had to keep redoing it. The fabric almost went torn because of all the re-stitches. I barely made it through the process and finished sewing the vest. I was exhausted. Afterschool dad went to pick up and I threw the vest into his car. I was very tired and frustrated, and I forgot the vest in the car. A few days later, when dad came to pick me up from school, I saw him wearing a garment in brown. I felt strange and unsure, then when he walked up to me smiling, I realised it's vest that I made. Why was he wearing it? I thought. But all of a sudden I found him very sweet putting on it. Actually I had no idea if he knew about my distress over the vest, but when I saw him wearing it, I felt very touched. You know, the vest was sewn uglily and yet he wore it. So this incident became very memorable to me.

55 (1m51s)

This piece of fabric is from some 20 years ago; my memory is becoming vague now. I remember it was when dad's cancer recurred; he could no longer walk and became bedridden in hospital or at home. For a few years we had to visit 10 different hospitals and sanatoriums frequently. Every time I helped dad with his leg physiotherapy, cleaning his body, changing his pajamas, etc. I could see the purple hospital gown or checkered patient pajamas, which I disliked the most – they were both my least favourite fabrics. On the contrary, whenever I saw clothes with white and blue stripes, I would feel comforted instantly, because that meant dad's all well at home, and the family has become complete again.

This common thin piece of cloth in white and blue stripes reminds me of my dad, who passed away 20 years ago. Time flies. I've never thought that I could feel comfort when I am reminded of this past; and now I feel myself having the courage in face of all the challenges ahead.

56 (2m55s)

This fabric actually came from the time of Sichuan earthquake. When I went to Qingchuan, not Beichuan, to play with other kids, I suggested, "Let's draw on cloth." It's weird. At that time we were short of supplies, I bought a piece of silk fabric which I thought was beautiful, and asked children to draw on it. Look, these were all drawn by them. And now after a decade, this silk fabric was torn, it has to be thrown away. Because of this exhibition, I decided to bring out this silk fabric. Once I hold it, it

breaks down to pieces. It is a very meaningful piece worth exhibiting – when it breaks, like the earthquake, the hearts of children are also broken. But still the story goes on. After ten years I take it out again, use another piece of thing... actually you can feel it, can you see it's broken? Broken to pieces. I put a backing fabric behind it but they went on breaking down to pieces; I put a cloth to cover it and also they went on breaking down to pieces. I mended here and there, finally I glued with rice milk on top, which seemed to stabilise it.

This whole process was similar to what I did in Sichuan, doing art therapies after the earthquake. When most of the things were broken, we slowly healed it. Sometimes we believed time will heal, but still it was broken. Slowly, gradually, layer by layer we battled against them, to overcome them. Of course this was what they have written to us after three years of work, such as this: the tree was missing. They were going to build this village together, the QQ village, it was an airship, this one was a horse or something, when the earthquake or the flood comes, it will fly to the sky, becoming the castle in the sky.

57 (49s)

That time? At that time I didn't have custom-fitted clothes. It was until I got married. That clothing is a bit of yellow, checker (pattern), already 30 years ago...my wife has thrown it away. It looked so nice, but my wife has thrown it away. It has only some checker patterns but no others. (Has she thrown away her's too?) I didn't even know she has thrown it away. My wife spends liberally. She threw away all those clothes I wore when I was working in the Japanese firm Mitsubishi. Those clothes were all so nice, and she threw away every single piece, then bought me new ones. Just forget it, right?

58 (34s)

My parents bought me fitted sheets when I was small. Cartoon characters such as Melody and the like. But if I was able to choose what I want, I would choose simple ones with plain colours. I want it to be... striped maybe. [Colour?] It would be light in tone.

59 (1m37s)

Talking about fabrics, the most impressive one would be the clothing of my mum. I combined them into a patchwork quilt for myself, because after my mum left, she didn't leave anything to us. What she could leave us would be her clothing. She was sick for long years, passed away some thirty years ago. At that time, we went to the elderly home, and they were going to throw away her clothes. My heart ached. I hugged the clothes and said, "Don't throw away." They would have been gone if we threw them away, which I didn't want it to happen. I brought them home, but what to do with them? It happened that one day I tore them into stripes, I got a sewing machine at home so I was able to sew them together into a blanket; and then I bought a backing fabric and put them together, making it the property she has left to me. Those patterns, because she was old, all her clothes had a dark tone. Women of

her time used to wear Chinese style overcoat with buttons in front, those clothing were made using 'elderly fabrics'.

After I have finished making this patchwork quilt – mum's patchwork quilt, I immediately thought of leaving something for my daughter too. Because this blanket was made after my mum was not here, I was thinking if, I got plenty of clothes and pants in my wardrobe but I just put on those placed on the top, most of them would just laid down there forever. So I decided to pick out some of the off-season clothes and sew them together to make a blanket. Keep it for my daughter, in memory of her mother.

60 (2m36s)

When I was as little, not even to the point of attending kindergarten, as 3 years old, my parents needed to work and we were moving house. They sent me to live with an uncle in Guangzhou who lived with his wife and also two aunts, in a small residential area in Guangzhou. Perhaps much of this is what I heard only...but what I could remember the most was the bed – it came with a bamboo mat and a mosquito net. You know, kids have a lot of free time, so I would learn riding a tricycle at the open area downstairs, next to some big trees. What I can best remember is a pillow that I used in those days. It was made with white cotton, printed with a lot of little seahorses in blue. I loved that pillow, until...I lived in Guangzhou for a year, and then mum came to bring me home. When I grew up, I wasn't told about this, but I remember it myself, I kept asking to look for the seahorse pillow. Also, there was something funny. I haven't seen my mum for almost a year back then, and she told me after some days, "When you came back to Hong Kong, your manners got worse and you did not get close to me." Having heard about that when I grew up, I only feel very funny. But it was quite a memory; living in Guangzhou when I was little, pre-kindergarten age...all I can remember is the pillow cloth with seahorses.