

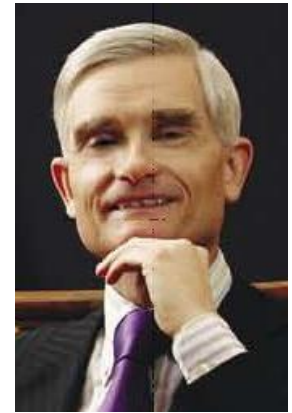
## CHRIS HALL (G62-69)

He was born on 12 March 1952 and after leaving the College went to Pembroke College, Cambridge, which gave the land on which the College was built. After leaving university he qualified as a chartered accountant in London and in 1978 went to live in Hong Kong where he lives to this day.

He spent many years as senior tax partner at Grant Thornton and in 2001 became Head of Tax at Equity Trust, still based in Hong Kong.

However, he is far more distinguished as a famous collector of Chinese textiles and his collection is considered the foremost private collection of its kind in the world.

He wrote most of the catalogue entries in the book "Heavens' Embroidered Cloths - One Thousand Years of Chinese Textiles". This was the catalogue of a Chinese textile exhibition, which he organised at the Hong Kong Museum of Art in 1995. It was the first major exhibition of Chinese textiles to take place anywhere in the world and included pieces from collections all over the world including the Liaoning Museum, which has the best collection of Chinese textiles in mainland China, his own collection and a major US collection.



He has recently received the Heritage Award from the Asian Civilizations Museum in Singapore.

In June 2006 he visited the College and gave a talk on Chinese Textiles.

Not content with amassing, over many years, one of the best collections of Chinese textiles in the World, he has quietly built an amazing collection of Japanese Fukusa – these are principally silk-embroidered squares of textile used to wrap formal gifts. Gift giving and receiving, in Japan, goes beyond simply commemorating a special occasion, and in historical times was very much about social rank and respect.

Early in 2024 he gave his collection of Japanese textiles to the Asian Civilizations Museum in Singapore. They organised an exhibition of his Japanese textiles, mainly gift covers.

To learn more about this collection, please follow the link to a “Three Screens Together” short film which talks about his Japanese gift cover collection. This was prepared by the Asian Civilizations Museum:  
<https://vimeo.com/934778959/6a542ced54?>





In December 2024 he decided to donate his entire Chinese Silk Collection to the Hong Kong Palace Museum. It is valued in the donation agreement at over US\$60 million.

Below is the speech given by the Director of the Museum and some photos of the signing ceremony.

**Speech by Dr. Louis NG, Director of Hong Kong Palace Museum at the Signing Ceremony of the Promised Gifts of Chinese Textile from Mr Chris Hall to the Hong Kong Palace Museum on 18 December 2024**

*Mr. Chris Hall (Chinese Textile Collector and Expert), distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen,*

*Good morning! I am delighted to have you here with us at the signing ceremony for the Deed for the promised gifts of Chinese textile from the esteemed art collector Mr. Chris Hall to the Hong Kong Palace Museum.*

*The Chris Hall Collection at the Hong Kong Palace Museum consists of nearly 3,000 works from the Warring States period to the 20th century. It is among the world's most comprehensive and important collections of historical Chinese textile. The transformative promised gifts have particular strengths in early textiles, the Silk Roads related materials, Ming and Qing rank badges, as well as religious and vernacular textiles. Accompanied by extensive research materials, this Collection will form a key resource for the study of Chinese textiles locally, nationally, and globally .*

*The Museum is profoundly grateful to the distinguished art collector Mr. Chris Hall for his deep commitment to research and access as well as his extraordinary generosity in offering the Collection to the museum. It is expected that in 2034 the Chris Hall Collection at the Hong Kong Palace Museum will be donated to the Museum. Starting from 2024, the HKPM plans to transfer the Collection to the museum's premise, making HKPM the repository of one of the world's most comprehensive collections of historical Chinese textile. This Collection will play an important role in advancing the vision and mission of HKPM with a commitment to the study and appreciation of Chinese art and culture.*

*As the home for this significant collection Chris Hall, we look forward to a set of ambitious and impactful programmes in research, exhibition, publication, documentation and conservation. In celebration of the promised gifts, we are planning a major exhibition featuring the Chris Hall Collection at the Hong Kong Palace Museum. Scheduled to open in September 2025, this exhibition, as one of the largest survey exhibitions on the history of Chinese textile art will highlight the comprehensiveness and significance of the collection and Mr Chris Hall's systematic collecting approach. We have also planned to travel this stunning collection to major museums in the mainland and overseas. The Museum will also lead the documentation and digitisation projects for the Collection. The significant promised gifts also provide the foundation and critical resource for the Museum's strategic collaboration with the Hong Kong Polytechnic University to establish "The Hong Kong Palace Museum – The Hong Kong Polytechnic University Joint Chinese Textile Centre". Combining the unparalleled resources and interdisciplinary expertise of researchers, professors, and curators and other specialists from PolyU and the HKPM, the Centre is poised to become a leader in Chinese historical textile research, education, publication, and creative application. With the aim of advancing and transforming the understanding of Chinese textile and its artistic, cultural, historical, and technological significance in Hong Kong and around the globe, the Centre will help encourage collaboration across disciplines and generate new knowledge in Chinese historical textile research.*

*In closing, let's put our hands together to offer Chris our deepest appreciation .*



The following article appeared in the China Daily Online on the day of the signing (18 December 2024)

**Hub to promote global understanding of Chinese textile heritage**  
**By Li Lei in Hong Kong**

*Hong Kong Palace Museum and The Hong Kong Polytechnic University have set up a center to deepen global appreciation for China's rich textile heritage.*

*The Hong Kong Palace Museum–Polytechnic University Joint Chinese Textile Center will function as a hub for research, education and public outreach, the two institutions said on Wednesday.*

*The hub aims to facilitate innovative applications of Chinese textile studies across various disciplines, including art, history, science and technology. It'll also provide valuable resources for PolyU's Faculty of Humanities, School of Fashion and Textiles, School of Design and other departments to enhance teaching and research initiatives.*

*The facility will focus mainly on the history of Chinese textiles, textile archaeology, and the study of Chinese costume, alongside scientific research and textile technology. Both institutions plan to organize a variety of academic activities, including courses, seminars and workshops.*

*The partnership was formalized at a signing ceremony at which the museum and PolyU said they're committed to advancing the study and understanding of Chinese textiles.*



*This April 11, 2024 photo shows the exhibition "A Passion for Silk: The Road from China to Europe" which includes many from Chris Hall's collection of Chinese textiles, at the Indra and Harry Banga Gallery of City University of Hong Kong. (PHOTO / CITYUHK)*

*A cornerstone of the initiative is a donation from Chris Hall -- one of the world's most influential collectors in Chinese textiles. He has pledged to donate nearly 3,000 items to the museum in 2034, showcasing the intricate artistry and historical significance of Chinese textiles.*

*The collection, which includes notable artifacts like rank badges from the Ming and Qing dynasties and various religious textiles, spans from the Warring States period (475-221 BCE) to the contemporary era, with parts of it set to be loaned to the museum later this month.*

*Speaking at the ceremony, Lam Tai-fai, chairman of the Hong Kong Polytechnic University Council, emphasized the potential of the partnership in enhancing the impact of the Chris Hall Collection in contemporary fashion and design while preserving traditional Chinese culture.*

*He said PolyU has won international acclaim for its academic and research achievements in textiles and design over the years, and the collaboration will leverage the strengths of both institutions to amplify the collection's influence.*

*"It aims to enhance global awareness and appreciation of Chinese textile art, while preserving the rich traditions of Chinese culture and solidifying Hong Kong's position as an East-meets-West center for international cultural exchange," he said.*

*In an interview after the ceremony, Hall described the center as a vital research and creative platform that will elevate public appreciation for the beauty and significance of Chinese textiles.*

*"My promised gifts to Hong Kong Palace Museum are the fruition of my art collection efforts over the past few decades. They testify to nearly 3,000 years of history in China, its splendid culture, and the Chinese people's pursuit of beauty," he said.*

*A major exhibition featuring the Chris Hall Collection is slated for next year at Hong Kong Palace Museum, displaying the rich history of Chinese silk culture and the cross-cultural exchanges exemplified by textiles.*

Below are a couple of additional photos supplied by Chris some years ago.



To view an excellent article on Chris and his collection, look at the article below from "A Plus", the professional journal of the Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants.

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Success ingredient

# From rags to riches

Chris Hall has two passions in life:  
textiles and taxation

By Christina Ko

Even if Bill Gates wanted to, he couldn't use his fortune to amass a collection of antique Chinese textiles to match that of distinguished CPA Chris Hall.

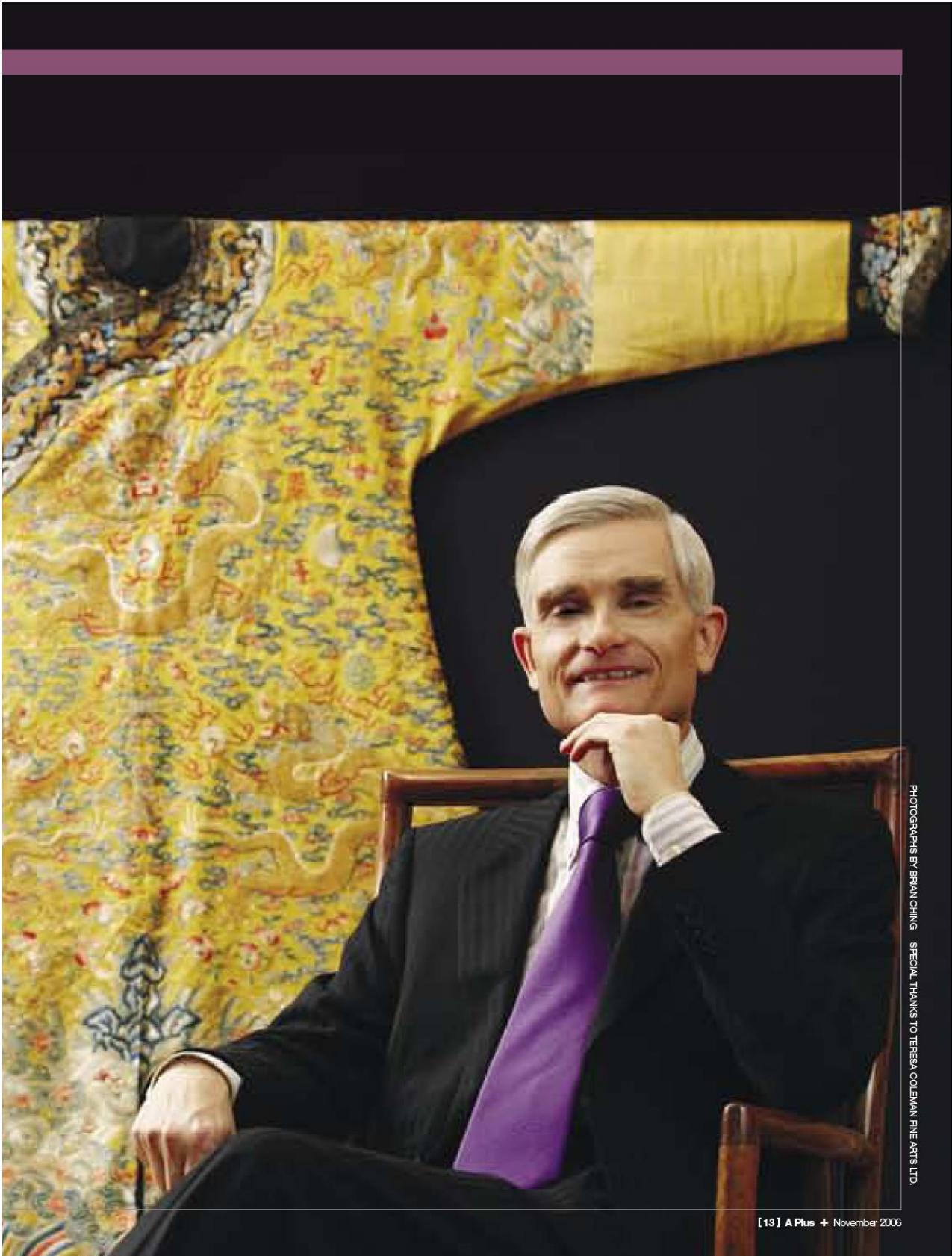
Formerly a senior tax specialist with Grant Thornton and known in accounting circles for his ardent approach to taxation, Hall is now head of tax at Equity Trust and head of its subsidiary Pacific Taxation Services Ltd., which specializes in setting up offshore structures, especially for U.S. clients. But in the field of Asian art, Chris Hall is famous for his collection of Chinese textiles, which is considered the foremost private collection of its kind in the world.

#### Lifelong collector

Hall is what you'd term a lifelong collector. In his youth, plastic models of zoo animals were his poison, then history books and stamps — "I believe that collectors are born," he explains. It was a chance visit to Hong Kong's Mandarin Oriental hotel in the 1970s that spurred his interest in textiles. Dazzled by the intricate threadwork on the Chinese robes that lined the hotel's lobby corridors, he became determined to possess some examples himself.

Today, Hall's collection includes more than 1,000 items, ranging from the expected — imperial robes, rank badges, weavings — to the more astonishing, such as miniature spinning wheels, the short stilts used by male

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+14

Success ingredient



opera players to fit into female bound-foot shoes, and an authentic letter addressed to the emperor from the imperial tailors.

When Hall began collecting, Chinese textiles weren't coveted art pieces, so he was able to amass quite a collection at a relatively low cost. Today, the richest man in the world couldn't duplicate this collection, he says — simply too many of these items are already in Hall's possession and most of the remaining equivalent pieces are in museums. It was a savvy investment and a potential retirement fund for an accountant, you'd think. But Hall has no intention of selling.

"When I choose a piece, I don't think of it as an investment," Hall says. "It's more just something I'd love to own. I look at four aspects: rarity, beauty, condition and age. Value and price are factors, but only in the sense that I'm not the richest man in the world. I need to be able to afford a piece."

A man of such expertise and renown could spend all his time searching out textiles, perhaps as the curator of a museum with pockets deeper than his own. Hall is adamant, however, that he

should collect privately. "My interest is in putting together the collection. It's much easier for me to make the money and then spend it how I want."

**A passion for taxes**

Hall equates deep pockets with reckless spending, whether in the art world or the tax world, and likens the evils of big-budget museum spending to excessive taxation.

"That's why I don't believe in implementing GST. It makes it too easy for the government to get money from the people. When a government earns money so easily, it spends it less wisely," he says. "Money in general is better spent when we make an individual decision to spend it. As a private collector, I've spent a certain amount on my art. You can bet that a museum would have spent more than I, simply because they have more money, and that the government would have spent even more than the museum."

Taxation is in fact Hall's second great interest. "Someone needs to protect the taxpayer, so my other passion is taxes — or rather, *not* paying taxes," he says with a laugh. "I tell

people that I turn taxes into textiles. At work, I use my technical expertise to protect people against the tribulations of modern business. I then take the money I earn and put it into my collection."

The man has dedicated a good portion of his life to the assembly of this collection, so preservation of the textiles is imperative. What Hall owns is part of the Chinese cultural heritage and he feels it is his obligation to look after it. Being organic, textiles decay, so instead of having proud displays of intricately embroidered dragons emblazoned across his apartment, Hall keeps his pieces in a dry, dark place, laid flat to minimize stress on the threads.

Besides protecting his bounty from mould and disintegration, Hall has taken steps to ensure he doesn't lose the collection in other ways: Living in the aftermath of Arthur Andersen, he realizes that the only way to keep his collection intact is to take the advice that he gives clients and to this end, he set up the Chris Hall Collection Trust as a safeguard.

Assets must be protected, after all. Bill Gates would surely agree. **A+**