The cherry blossom season is over. The leaves of the trees which began to sprout in early spring have turned deep green. On the morning of a holiday at the beginning of May, I opened a window and felt myself bathing in the warm rays of the sun. I then decided to arrange my seasonal change of clothing, since I would not need heavy coats and sweaters any longer.

First, I took the heavy coats out of the cupboard and after inspection put them in a corner of the room. I make it a rule to send to the laundry those coats which I wore during winter. Next, I opened a chest of drawers and took out the sweaters I had also used during winter. In one pile I put those which I would take to the laundry for dry-cleaning. In the other I put those which I would wash at home. Then I opened the sliding door of a wall cabinet. In the boxes arranged in the lower partition were the summer clothes which I had put there at the time of seasonal change of clothing last autumn. When I took off the lids and put them on the floor, I found that the side of my mobile phone was flashing. I had not noticed that there was a message. I checked the phone and discovered that the message was from my elder sister in Kyoto. It said:

‘I have been arranging my seasonal change of clothing since yesterday. I am sick and tired of doing it. Buying new clothes, of course, needs money, but now disposing of old ones also costs some. I’ve made up my mind never to buy another dress.’

Reading my sister’s e-mail, I could imagine her sighing in a sea of clothing just as I was doing then.

My sister and I have been fond of dressing smartly since our childhood. Before we got married, we would go shopping not only in
Seasonal Change of Clothing

Kyoto but further afield in Osaka and Kobe. After our marriages, our situations became quite different from each other. I have devoted myself to domestic chores, only sometimes working part-time. My sister has continued working at an office five days a week. She has often complained that as a commuter she constantly had to be dressed up and could not possibly go through even one winter wearing the same overcoat. Naturally she has also had the additional costs of spending money on her dresses.

Some years ago when she came to have time to herself, freed from looking after her children, she said to me:

‘I went shopping on my own and bought this.’

In those days I spent most of my time doing chores at home. Except when I went out occasionally for my part-time job, I usually stayed at home. The opportunities for me to get dressed up were when I went shopping for food and when I attended a PTA meeting at my children’s school. You might think that my principle of buying a dress only when I was entirely satisfied with it was a bit of a luxury. Recently, I stopped working part-time and started a new life as a regular worker. Since then I have been faced with a variety of situations requiring my presence when I have had to take care to choose a dress suitable for the occasion. This necessarily led to increasing the number of my dresses. Surrounded with piles of clothing, I sent an e-mail to my sister:

‘You had better throw away the clothes you haven’t worn for five years. However highly you may regard them, they are a miser’s gold buried in the ground. Changes of fashion take place so quickly it makes five-year-old clothing out of date. It may be nothing but rubbish.’

Putting my mobile on the floor, I continued arranging my seasonal change of clothing. The T-shirts I took out from a chest have not been worn for three years. I remembered I had bought them at a supermarket bargain sale at the end of the season when my daughters were primary school pupils. Should I throw them away, or . . .? My attachment to them prevented me from making up my mind to throw them away. I didn’t wear them last year, it is true, but I might put them on this year. Finally, I decided to keep them and put them into the chest. Next, I took out my sports wear. The colour was a