

were carried away to forest and left there to die. There also existed a blood feud. The Vikings had a great number of slaves. Beauty and youth attracted them only as goods.

A ship played an important role in the life of the Vikings. They thought of it as (of) their house. And sometimes a man was born in a ship and died also there many-many years later.

And in conclusion I'd like to tell you about the mystery of Stonehenge. The best-known stone-circle named Stonehenge dates from between 1900 and 1600 BC. It is made of many upright stones, standing in groups of twos. Every stone weighs about 7 tons. No one can tell how these large stones were moved, or from what places they were brought. Stonehenge is still a mystery.

Archaeologists think that Stonehenge was just a place for religious ceremonies. Now they think it was also a kind of calendar. There is a hypothesis that some other civilization with a much higher level of knowledge coded main principles of life in the henges, and the British and other world nations developed according to these principles.

According to the official information, there are no such constructions anywhere else. And to sum it all up I'd like to say that today I touched only a very small part of all mysterious events in the history of the West. And if I was able to awake your interest in this topic, I'm very glad. And you can try to find more information.

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## **KIMONO – TRADITIONAL JAPANESE FASHION**

Japanese fashion consists of a mixture of both traditional and modern styles. I would like to tell you about traditional Japanese fashion. Kimono is a traditional

Japanese style. The Japanese kimono took its form mostly in the second half of the 16th century. It was the main dress for more than 300 years until western clothes were introduced. The kimono's popularity spread nationwide and was worn by men and women of all classes. Today it is rare to wear kimono in a daily life. Kimonos are now worn primarily for special occasions as ceremonial attire.

Kimono is also worn by both men and women in certain sports, such as kendo. The Japanese kimono is long and open in the front; it wraps around the body and is fastened over the waist with a wide sash called an 'obi'. When worn the kimono is cylinder shaped and has long baggy sleeves which are suitable for the hot humid summer climate in Japan. The form and pattern of the kimono, the quality of the material, and the width of the sash, all represent differences in occasion, time and the status of the wearer. In addition, differences in pattern, material and lining cloth reflect the season in which it is worn.

Japan is an island country surrounded by the sea. The Japanese love animals and plants, and truly value a sense of season. Japanese shintoism, an ancient religion still followed today, was founded on a faith in nature. One of the principals of that faith is a respect for the coexistence of human beings and nature. Such a background has definitely influenced the design of the Japanese kimono. Techniques such as embroidery, dyeing and painting are artistically employed on the kimono to illustrate fertile natural scenes, featuring seasonal flowers, trees, birds and animals.

There are styles of Kimono for various occasions, ranging from extremely formal to very casual. The Japanese bride's wedding clothes took their form based on the military class customs of the 16th century. For the wedding ceremony the bride wore "shiomuku" (an immaculate wedding kimono). Speaking about a child's kimono it was prepared in order to commemorate the many turning points in life: birth; celebrated on the child's seventh night, first visit to a shrine, festival to celebrate the growth of children at ages three, five and seven. This kimono is loaded with wishes of healthy growth. Kimono can be expensive. A woman's kimono may easily exceed US\$10,000; a complete kimono outfit, with kimono,

undergarments, obi, ties, socks, sandals and accessories, can exceed US\$20,000. Kimono are never wasted. Old kimono are recycled in various ways: they may be altered to make haori, hiyoku, or kimono for children; the fabric may be used to patch similar kimono; larger pieces of fabric may be used for making handbags and other similar kimono accessories; and smaller pieces can be used to make covers, bags or cases for various implements, especially things like the sweet-picks used in tea ceremony.

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## **AMERICAN DREAM: THE STRESSED MIDDLE CLASS**

The term 'American dream' was first used by James Truslow Adams in 1931. It was as follows: "The American Dream is a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement. It is a dream of social order in which each man and each woman shall be able to attain to the fullest stature of which they are innately capable, and be recognized by others for what they are, regardless of the circumstances of birth or position." The United States "Declaration of Independence" says: "... that all Men are created equal, that they have certain Rights that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." The traditional American Dream is based on the belief that hardworking citizens can better their lives, pay their monthly bills without worry, and give their children a start to an even better life and still save enough to live comfortably after they retire.