

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.

The research surveyed more than 2,200 Americans, of whom fully 84% described themselves as belonging to the middle class, regardless of where they live or the size of their household. The research was focused on U.S. families (married and having children) earning between \$30,000 and \$99,000 a year. More than 64% say they are employed full-time or part-time, they are in reasonably good health and have a satisfying religious or spiritual life, they own a home and at least two cars, and they are able to take vacations. By international standards, they live a life of prosperity. But there is a growing unease. Half of the employed respondents say that they've experienced either increased health-care costs or a cut in health benefits over the last three years, and 39% have had cuts in their overtime, raises or bonuses. Almost two-thirds say they live from paycheck to paycheck, and 47% say that no matter how hard they work, they cannot get ahead. More than a third worries about job loss. Nearly 83% say that there is not much left to save after they've paid their bills. Let's see some examples. Richard Oden of Conyers, married, with five children—worked in the beer industry for 23 years. Last year he developed pneumonia and required major surgery. When he was unable to return to work by a given date, his company fired him at age 54—even though he had a perfect attendance record and no performance problems. More than that he had to pay a penalty for premature withdrawal. Oden has started his own business. He believes he will recover financially and will realize a decent retirement.

Shelly Comer, aged 43, of Dos Palos, California, is a divorced mother of three who also takes care of a friend of her oldest child, Michelle. She is going into debt so that Michelle can go to college. Shelly has worked her whole life. Now she is a registered nurse and works the night shift in obstetrics at another hospital. Her annual income is \$70,377.

Michelle, aged 19, is a freshman at the University of California. Her education is needed to be paid. Her mother has to borrow the entire amount of her share. For her part, Michelle earned six small scholarships, two of which are left for next year, and took out a federal loan. She also works 16 hours a week in the financial-aid office at the university. Simone Luevano, aged 46, and Miguel

Gutierrez, aged 44, run a garage-door installation and repair business in Albuquerque. While the business grossed \$453,000 last year, they took home just \$50,000 net to live on. They have a daughter—Marilyn, age 7—who is deaf in one ear and goes to a private school that costs \$3600 a year. As they say the words ‘retirement’ and ‘vacation’ are not in their vocabulary.

Who is responsible? 89% of the middle class believes that businesses have a social responsibility to their employees and to the community. Yet 81% believe that, in fact, American businesses make decisions based on what is best for their shareholders and investors, not what’s best for their employees.

The American Dream is a bygone thing. It’s not the way life is anymore. Everyone used to believe he or she was responsible for his or her own destiny. But it’s not that simple. Now it’s faith and fortitude. To be “middle class” in America once meant living well and having financial security. But today that comfortable and contented lifestyle is harder to achieve and maintain. Thomas Wolfe once said, “...to every man, regardless of his birth, his shining, golden opportunity ....the right to live, to work, to be himself, and to become whatever thing his manhood and his vision can combine to make him.”

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## **ВОСТОК И ЗАПАД**

Мир принято делить на Восток и Запад. Сначала может показаться, что это ничего не значащее географическое деление, но если тщательнее присмотреться, то становится понятно, что Восток и Запад во многом отличаются.

В восточных странах преобладает сельское хозяйство, они в большей степени – аграрные. Тогда как западные страны развиты лучше. В них сельское