

Information Sheet for Futures in the East for the 21st Century

By Michael Lee, Founder of the Institute of Futurology

- Expect an era of increased Chinese nationalism and national pride, including the flexing of military muscle, between now and 2050
- China's one-party dictatorship will be reformed in the long-run as education and knowledge produce millions of citizens demanding greater democratic freedom
- A great new peaceful Chinese civilisation could emerge towards the middle of the century which would benefit, rather than harm, humanity
- A new golden age for Russia beckons between 2015-2050 as it becomes an energy giant due to its large stocks of oil and natural gas and a leading military power
- Expect a restless cat-and-mouse foreign policy from Russia for the next few decades as it balances its newfound wealth, power and demographic challenges
- This century will witness the long, slow sunset of Japan's power, as its ageing and depopulating society drags the economy down with it
- There is a moderate danger before 2050 of a nationalistic war between old rivals Japan and China
- Japan could lose a million people a year throughout this century to depopulation
- Japan will become the most robotised society on earth with robots automating as many jobs as possible to compensate for its drastically shrinking workforce
- Japan will also become the world's oldest society, with its mean age increasing from 45 years old in 2010 to 54.6 years old by 2060
- Japan could face colonisation by an Asian power in the years 2060-2100 and possible extinction in the 22nd century if their conquerors inter-bred with the Japanese

- Social, economic and environmental problems will escalate over the next ten years in North Korea and the country will face more famines and malnutrition as its agriculture continues to decline and the state slides into debt and bankruptcy
- A popular revolution is likely to begin in North Korea sometime between 2020-2030 leading to civil war and an eventual occupation by China
- China will then bring about the belated modernisation of North Korea, producing an agricultural and economic revival in the 2nd half of this century
- Finally, the two Koreas are likely to unite sometime between 2050-2120, as Germany did in 1990
- A generation of far-reaching social change lies ahead as Australia develops a socially inclusive Asia Pacific society transcending historic racism; expect during this time of change a period of rising social tension, lasting a decade or two, including political polarisation and conflict
- Increased activism among Aborigines will see them gain further legal and constitutional ground until Australia fully reconciles with its indigenous people
- Australia will scientifically define its ecological carrying capacity and maximum sustainable population and base its population policies on its findings as the continent adapts to climate change and intensified El Niño-La Niña cycles and their impact on water security and agricultural production
- Australia is likely to become a Republic well before mid-century while deepening its Trans-Pacific partnerships with China, Japan, Korea, Indonesia and other Asian neighbours throughout the century

In sum, we will see the rise of China and Russia as the powers and civilisations to dominate East Asia and Eurasia this century at the expense of a declining and dangerously depopulating Japan and an economically vulnerable Europe. While Australia will undergo a tense period of far-ranging social change as a victim of climate change and peculiarities of its own history, the time-warped North Korean regime is almost certain to collapse long before 2050, leading to its colonisation by China and its eventual modernisation and ultimate reunion with South Korea.

Read Michael Lee's futurological essays and scenarios for China, Japan, Russia, North Korea and Australia at www.futurology.co.za.

About Michael Lee

Michael Lee is a futurist who founded the World Future Society's Southern African Chapter and the Institute of Futurology. He is CEO of the ATM Industry Association (www.atmia.com), a non-profit trade association with more than 3,500 members in 60 countries. Lee is a member of the World Future Society (www.wfs.org), the International Society for the Study of Time (www.studyoftime.org), the Royal Institute of Philosophy (www.royalinstitutephilosophy.org) and the Institute of Physics (www.iop.org). He serves on the Board of Directors of the global ATM Industry Association and the US-based Benefit Corporation Standards Institute (<http://www.bcorpoinstitute.org>). His book *Knowing our Future – the startling case for futurology* will be published in November 2012 - http://www.infideas.com/pages/store/products/ec_view.asp?PID=1804. The book is also available on Amazon at <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/1906821984>