

Information Sheet for Long-Term Future of Japan
By Michael Lee, Founder of the Institute of Futurology

“Our choice is rebirth or ruin.”

Yoichi Funabashi in “Japan’s Zero Hour”

- 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 with China
- But Japan’s greatest danger is depopulation, with its population likely to shrink dramatically from 128 million in 2010 to 86 million by 2060, losing 90 million citizens in 90 years between 2010-2100, a severe average depopulation rate of 1 million people every year
- The working force of Japan will shrink from 63.8% of the population in 2010 to 50% of the population by 2060
- 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 become the world’s oldest society, with its mean age increasing from 45 years old in 2010 to 54.6 years old by 2060, while its family structures continue to weaken
- Japan may embrace isolationism in its foreign policy and fatalism in its worldview
- Japan will become increasingly green, conserving its environment beautifully while becoming a world leader in clean technologies
- After several decades of graceful decline, economic stagnation, population ageing and demographic shrinkage, a *much* smaller and older Japan will face colonisation by an Asian power in the years 2060-2100
- If the conquerors of Japan towards the end of this century inter-breed with the Japanese, it could mean an eventual vanishing of Japan within a generation or two of this conquest in the years 2100-2150

Read Michael Lee’s scenarios for Japan: the Bonsai Future, the 2nd Meiji Future, the Robot Future and the Zombie Future in his essay “Demographic Sunset in the Land of the Rising Sun: Japan in the 21st Century” 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>