

Outlook: 2026
East Asian Robotics 2026-2030:
China, Korea & Japan

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Introduction

East Asia. Draw a radius 1,500-miles around Hong Kong. Within that circle lives more than half of humanity — some five billion people! Among the countries there, three nations aspire to be the technological vanguard of the twenty-first century: the three-legged stool of East Asia's technology elite, China, Korea, and Japan. Together, East Asia accounts for the lion's share of the world's industrial robots, an outsized share of global patents in robotics, automation and artificial intelligence, and an unmatched concentration of engineering talent. Yet each faces a crisis that no amount of economic ingenuity or technological wizardry has so far been able to solve.

Fertility rates have collapsed. Workforces are shrinking. The elderly are multiplying faster than any social-support system was designed to absorb. Youth unemployment sits at alarming levels even as factories go begging for skilled hands. The arithmetic is unforgiving: fewer workers, more dependents, slower growth — and a population clock is ticking loudly in Beijing, Seoul, and Tokyo.

The remedy that the leadership of all three has reached is the same: robots. Not the clumsy, single-purpose machines of the last century, but a new generation of intelligent, adaptive, AI-converged systems: robots embodied with artificial intelligence (AI). That's smart, agile humanoids that can navigate a factory floor, cobot arms that learn on the job, autonomous platforms that move goods without a driver, and service robots that can support an ageing population in ways no human workforce can sustain at scale. As [Li Yuan wrote in the New York Times](#), "The ambitious state-driven plan to retool China's industries is not being pushed just by top leaders. Instead, the drive is also coming from the bottom up: from the businesses and cities across China that know they must [modernize or perish.](#)"

Outlook: 2026–2030 East Asian Robotics: China, Korea, Japan maps this transformation in detail. Drawing on breaking industry news, original analysis, and deep regional expertise, it

covers the full spectrum: humanoids, industrial robots and cobots, mobile platforms, drones, autonomous vehicles, and service robots across manufacturing, supply chains, and healthcare. It tracks the latest research emerging from universities and government laboratories, and it examines the policy frameworks: China's 15th Five-Year Plan (2026-2030), Korea's Manufacturing AI Transformation (M.AX) program (launched in 2025), and Japan's rejuvenated Moonshot #3 program (robots converged with AI). Each making a mad dash for a national remedy, accelerating everywhere from R&D labs through to deployment on a national scale.

Actionable information. This eBook is written for robotics developers and engineers, business leaders and executives, technology investors, researchers, educators and students who need more than headlines. It is a one-of-a-kind, primary resource for anyone who must understand what is happening in East Asian robotics, where its bound — and why the next five years could well define the industry for a generation.

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