Immigration issue

This overview outlines the current situation and key issues regarding Japan's acceptance of foreign nationals and immigration. Although the Japanese government officially maintains that it does not adopt "so-called immigration policies" (specifically, the acceptance of unskilled laborers with the intention of permanent settlement), the rapid aging of the population and labor shortages are driving a trend toward de facto long-term residency and settlement.

Background and Current Situation—Increase in Foreign Residents and Workers: The number of foreign workers continues to hit record highs year after year, helping to alleviate labor shortages. System Restructuring: Due to widespread criticism regarding human rights violations and the disconnect between the existing "Technical Intern Training Program" and actual conditions, a transition is underway toward a new "Training and Employment System" aimed at securing and developing human resources.

Key Issues and Points of Discussion: Labor Environment and Human Rights — Issues such as low wages, long working hours, exploitative practices by intermediaries, and human rights violations (including harassment) are occurring frequently, drawing international criticism.

Social Integration and Multicultural Coexistence — Regional friction arises from factors such as language barriers, discrepancies regarding daily living rules (e.g., garbage disposal and noise), and delays in the provision of multilingual support by administrative bodies and local governments.

Regarding social security, taxes, and healthcare, there are concerns about unpaid premiums and the misuse of health insurance and pension systems, as well as debates concerning the rising social security costs associated with foreign nationals settling in the country.

Regarding the impact on the economy and wages, there is a debate over whether the influx of low-cost labor suppresses overall wage growth; at the same time, there is a reality where many industries cannot function without foreign personnel.

Overall, the discussion is moving beyond mere "labor force supplementation" to address two parallel tracks: the development of infrastructure for long-term coexistence as residents (covering education, Japanese language learning, and social security systems) and policy debates regarding intake caps and the tightening of rules.

Here are six key points currently being debated regarding the acceptance of foreign nationals and immigration issues in Japan:

1. "Securing a workforce" vs. "The risk of suppressing domestic wages"

While there are high hopes that foreign workers will serve as a "savior" to alleviate severe labor shortages (in sectors such as construction, elderly care, agriculture, and logistics), there are also conflicting concerns that an influx of low-wage foreign labor could deprive domestic workers of opportunities for across-the-board wage increases and improvements in working conditions.

What are your thoughts on this?

2. Human Rights Protection and System Design (Transition to the "Training and Employment System")

The key question is whether the new system can resolve human rights issues—such as low wages, restrictions on changing jobs, harassment, and exploitation by intermediaries—that plagued the previous "Technical Intern Training Program." The focus of the debate lies in the effectiveness and strict implementation of the "Training and Employment System," which is set to be introduced from 2027 onwards.

What are your thoughts on this?

3. Social Integration and Friction within Local Communities

Disputes frequently arise within neighborhood associations and local communities due to language and cultural barriers, as well as differences in daily living rules—such as those regarding garbage disposal and noise. Infrastructure to support their acceptance as "local residents" rather than merely as a "workforce"—such as multilingual services provided by local governments and the promotion of Japanese language education—has not kept pace with the situation.

What are your thoughts on this?

4. Maintaining and Ensuring the Proper Use of Social Security, Tax, and Healthcare Systems
As more foreign nationals settle permanently, enrollment in and benefit claims for health insurance and pension systems are increasing. While they are expected to contribute as system participants (supporters), there are persistent concerns regarding issues such as unpaid insurance premiums, the increased burden on medical institutions, and the improper use of these systems.
What are your thoughts on this?

5. Public Safety, Perceptions of Safety, and Stricter Legal Rules
Issues such as the handling of illegal residents and individuals released on provisional stay, as well as public anxiety regarding crime rates (including the gap between actual statistics and public perception), are subjects of debate. A balance must be struck between tightening the criteria for revoking permanent residency and strengthening enforcement against rule violations, while simultaneously preventing excessive xenophobia.
What are your thoughts on this?

6. National Vision and Long-Term Settlement/Permanent Residency Policies (The Issue of Family Accompanying)
Although the government consistently maintains that it does not adopt an immigration policy premised on permanent settlement, there is a rise in actual long-term residency and cases of family members accompanying workers (such as under the "Specified Skilled Worker (ii)" status). Critics point out a lack of clarity regarding the national strategy for the future shape of Japanese society—specifically, whether to aim for a multi-ethnic, multicultural society that embraces diversity or to maintain certain restrictions.
What are your thoughts on this?

7.The agenda for this session was created entirely by AI and then processed through Google Translate. I gave the AI the following two questions. What are your thoughts on them?
Please share your opinions.
A)　日本の移民問題についてまとめてください
B)　日本の移民問題について議論する論点を6っつ挙げてください