

Japan Moving Towards Expanding Acceptance of Foreign Workers

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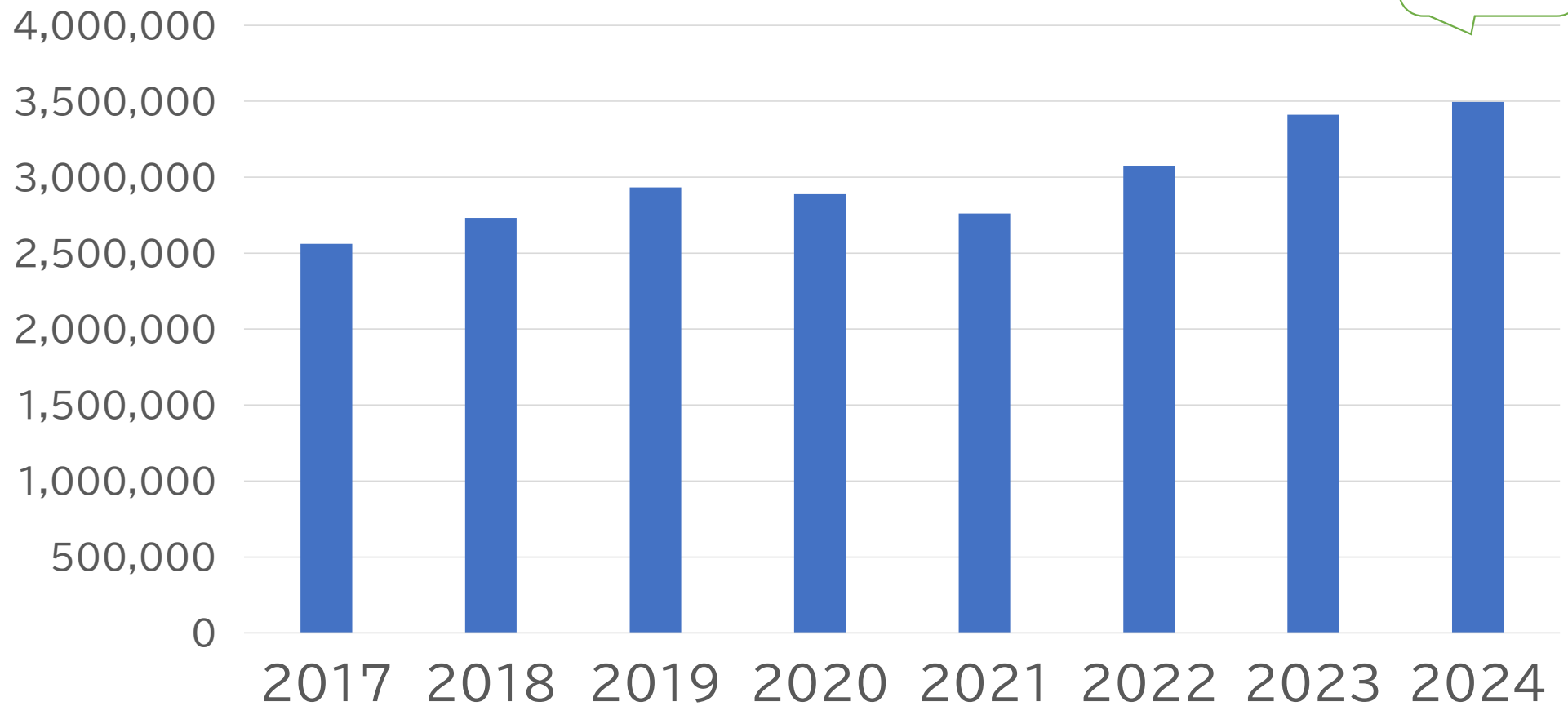
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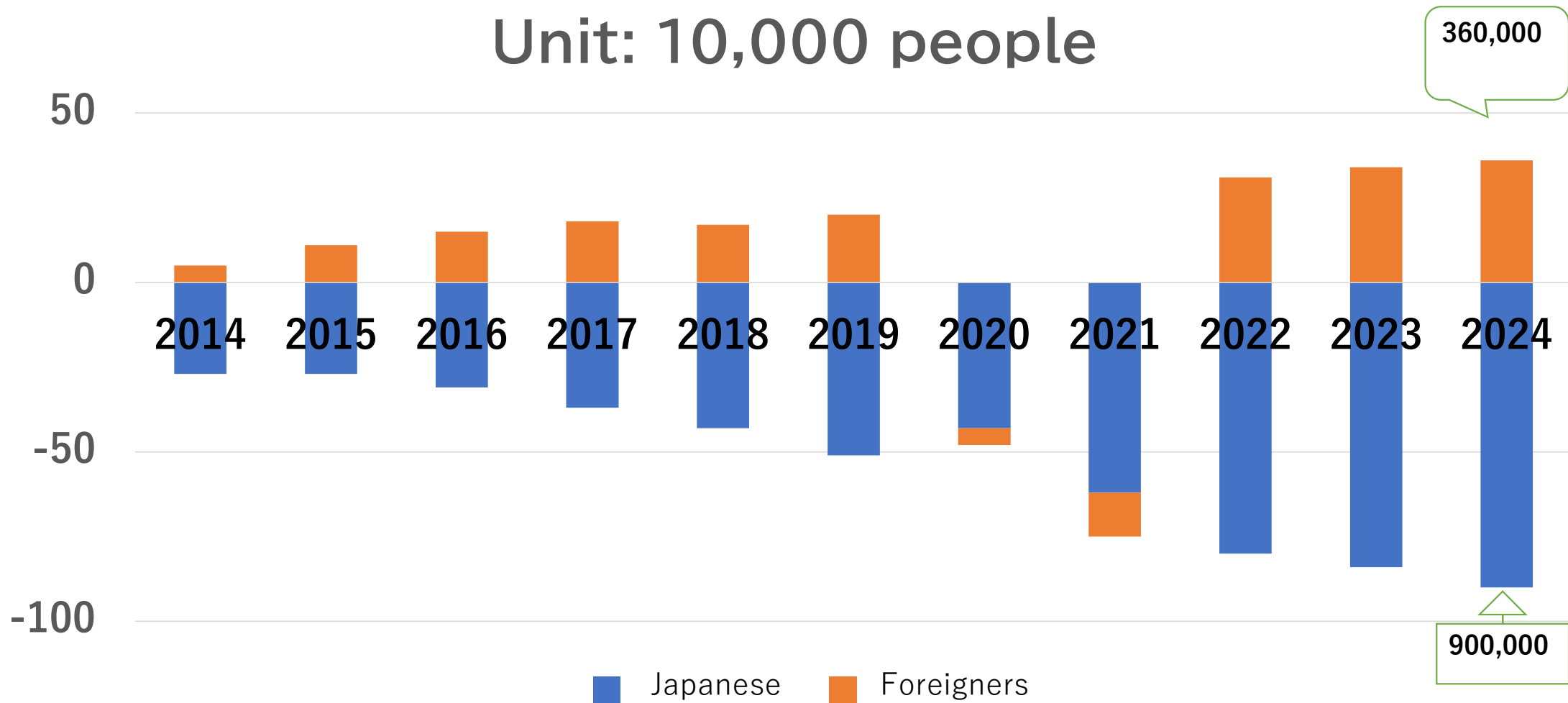
Number of Foreign Residents in Japan (Year End)

**3.77
million**



Changes to Numbers of Japanese and Foreigners

Unit: 10,000 people

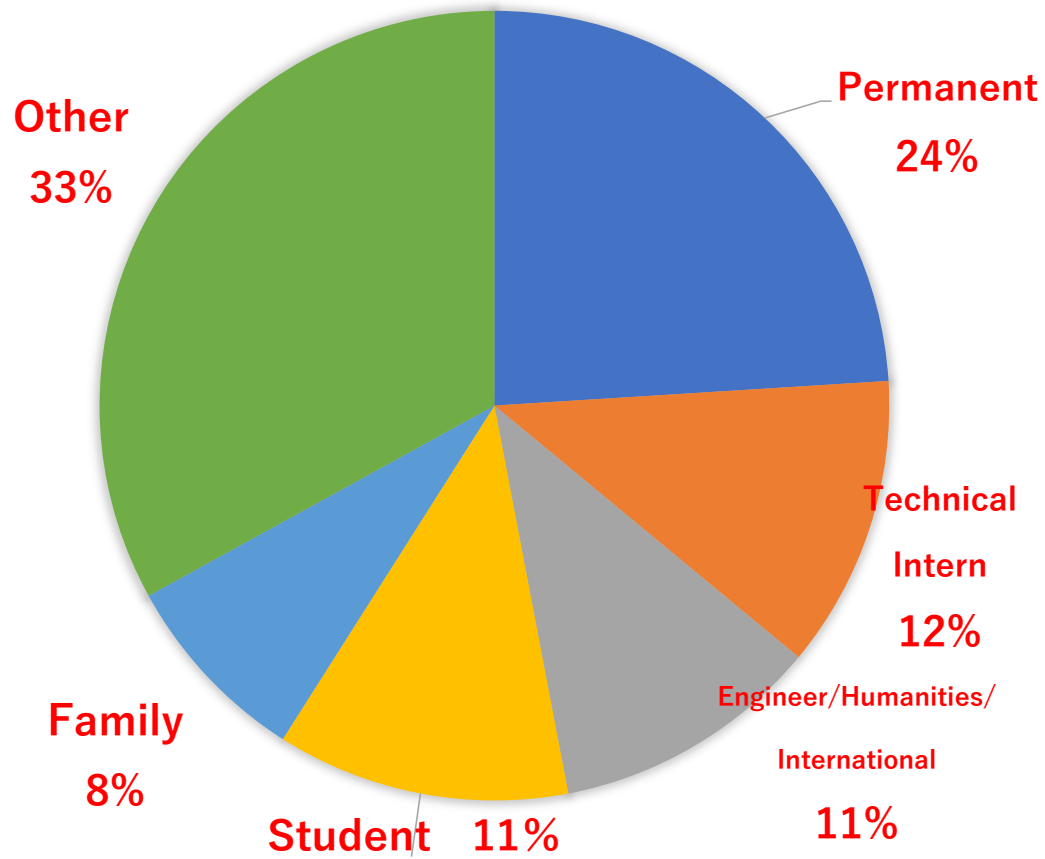


Changes to Reliance on Foreign Workers 2014-2024

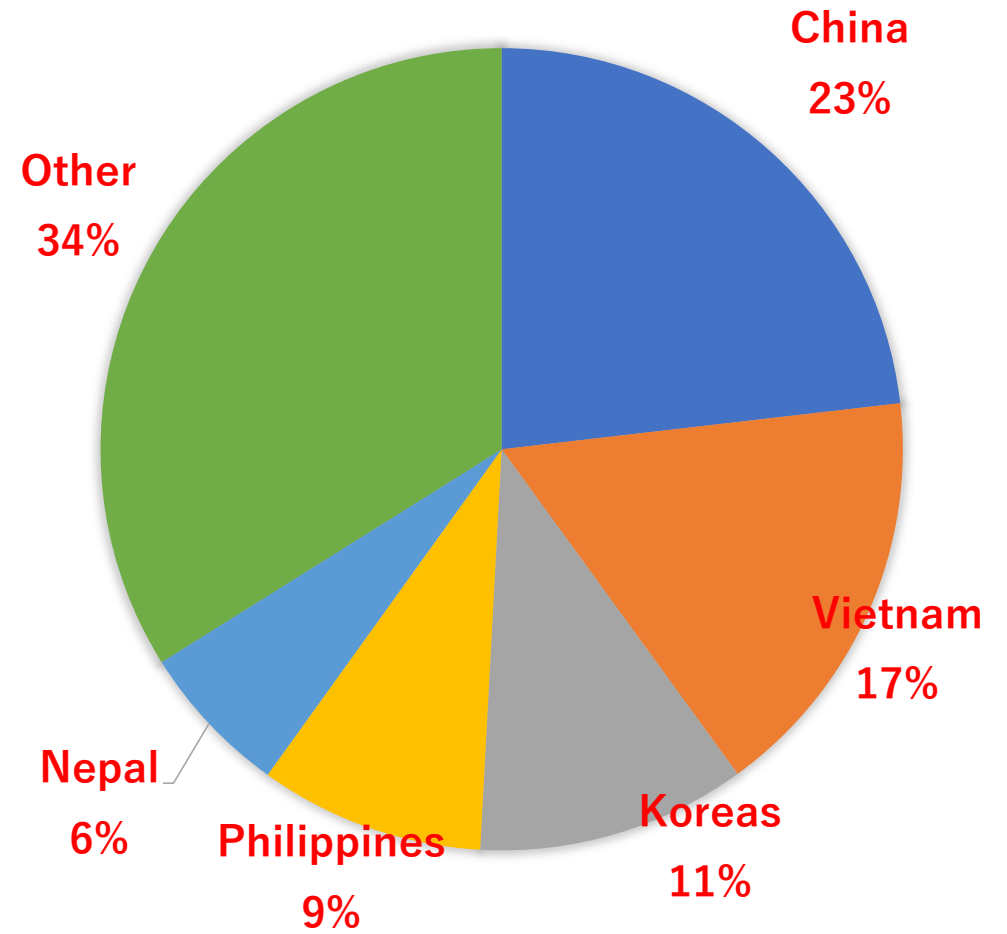
Agriculture, Forestry	3.8 times (1/119人→1/31人)	Finance, Insurance	1.7 times (1/205人→1/120人)
Fishing	5.2 times (1/99人→1/19人)	Real Estate, Leasing	3.5 times (1/210人→1/60人)
Construction	9.1 times (1/246人→1/27人)	Research, Specialized, Technology	2.4 times
		Service	(1/78人→1/33人)
Manufacturing	2.2 times (1/38人→1/17人)	Lodging, Food Services	2.8 times (1/42人→1/15人)
ICT	2 times (1/64人→1/32人)	Living and Personal Services, Entertainment	2.6 times (1/204人→1/77人)
Shipping, Postal	2.8 times (1/128人→1/46人)	Education	1.4 times (1/57人→1/42人)
Wholesale, Retail	3.3 times (1/116→1/35人)	Healthcare, Welfare	8 times (1/634人→1/79人)

2.8 times
(1/81人→1/29人)

2024 by Residency Status



2024 by Nationality



Changes to Government Policy Since 2018

1. December 2018: Revision to Immigration Act

- Created the new “Specified Skilled Worker” residency status
(Opening a path to long-term residency for blue collar workers)
- Established the Immigration Services Agency

2. December 2018: Comprehensive Measures for Acceptance and Coexistence of Foreign Nationals

Revised multiple times, expanded to 218 companies

3. June 2019: Act on Promotion of Japanese Language Education

4. June 2022: Roadmap for the Realization of a Society of Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals

“Support for each life stage and life cycle”

→ **Beginning of policies assuming long-term residency.
But no clear explanation was given to Japanese citizens.**

Essentially a stealth immigration policy

A Government Which Will Not Recognize Immigration

Migrant (UN): Someone who has lived in a country other than their native country for a year or more

June 2018: Basic Policy on Economic and Fiscal Management and Reform 2018
(Big-boned Policy)

“Therefore, we will create an additional residence status to accept a wider range of foreign human resources for essential fields of expertise and skill sets as a separate measure from immigration policies.”

→Creation of Specified Skilled Worker status

October 2018, PM Abe: “The government is not considering a so-called immigration policy.”

He defined an immigration policy as “A policy to maintain a nation by accepting foreign nationals and their families for a non-specified period of time, at a certain ratio compared to the population of citizens.”

Prime Ministers Kan and Kishida also professed these opinions

Movements in 2025

May 23, 2025: Ministry of Justice “Zero Illegal Foreign Residents Plan”

June 6, 2025: LDP Policy Research Council Special Committee for Realizing a Society of Orderly and Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals proposal

Details: Prevention of non-payment of social insurance premiums, stronger regulations for land purchases by foreign nationals, stricter foreign driver license conversion system, harsher screening for Business Manager visa

July 15, 2025: Cabinet Office established Office for a Society of Orderly and Harmonious Coexistence with Foreign Nationals

August 2025: Minister of Justice Private Study Group “Summary of Issues for Accepting Foreign Nationals”

Suggested the arrival of an age where 10% of the population is foreign nationals, proposed the necessity of strategically examining the necessity of and tolerance for accepting foreign nationals

Policies by Local Governments for Active Acceptance of Foreign Nationals

The Nikkei “Survey of Heads of Local Governments on the Acceptance of Foreign Nationals (October–November 2023)”

“I would like to accept them to respond to labor shortages”: 39%

“I would like to accept them regardless of labor shortages”: 24%

“I would like to accept them”: 71% for local governments with population decline of 5% or more

- Gunma Prefectural Ordinance for Promotion of Intercultural Co-creation (April 2021)

Foreign nationals living as members of their local community, benefiting from diversity while creating new value for culture and the economy and stimulating their local community.

- Kochi Prefecture 2nd Plan for the Promotion of Acceptance of Foreign Workers (April 2024)

Further increase the satisfaction of foreign workers in Kochi and enhance the appeal of Kochi Prefecture aside from wages, so it becomes a prefecture chosen by foreign workers

Others

- Yamanashi Prefecture declared itself a “Japanese Language Promotion Prefecture” (2023)
- Ibaraki Prefecture announced the Ibaraki Happiness Index for Foreign Nationals (December 2024)

Based on a total of 14 indicators, Ibaraki Prefecture ranked 4th (behind Tokyo, Mie, and Aichi)

Sanseito “Japanese First” Phenomenon

Why is “Japanese First” so widely accepted?

1. Low youth wages due to the lost 30 years and declining birthrate→Distrust of LDP and existing opposition parties
2. Poor manners of tourists and buying up of land by foreign nationals (Chinese)
3. No government policy or explanation regarding increase in foreign residents (More foreign workers to increase company profits, but the average citizen sees no benefit)
Moving forward with accepting foreign workers without considering capacity (Government has continued to claim it will not implement an immigration policy)
4. Common perception that “immigrants” are criminals in waiting. And since the government has said it will not implement an immigration policy, the government has admitted to the perception that “immigrants=bad”.
5. The pleasure of breaking taboos (anti-intellectualism): Backlash against pseudo-intellectuals

Ways to Solve These Issues

1. Implement policies to increase opportunities for Japanese and foreign nationals to communicate and interact
2. Make Japanese language education for foreign nationals semi-mandatory
3. Have the government redefine immigration
4. Mutual tension between the number of foreign nationals accepted and the framework for acceptance (Japanese language, career paths, child education)
5. Accept foreign nationals who have the skills to live in Japan long-term: High school or greater education, Japanese language skills (the ability to read and write in Japanese)

The Success Rate of Accepting Immigrants to Japan Is High

1. No border crises (unplanned sudden increase in foreign nationals)

Unlike Europe or North America, with their land borders, sudden increases in undocumented foreign nationals do not occur, and no severe migrant or refugee crisis happens

2. Decline in the domestic population at a productive age and labor shortage

By bringing in workers with potential and developing their abilities appropriately, **they can work long-term with low risk of losing their jobs** (a majority of the migrant criminals in Europe are unemployed young men).

3. History and Experience of Multicultural Coexistence

The existence of civil society and local governments who provided grassroots support for foreign nationals without any policies or budget from the national government

4. Japan's history and identity of accepting people from China and Korea in the past, and developing through creative destruction and innovation