

FGL Community Newsletter



Florals and festivals left
and right!

Grab yourself some dango, pop by some club
shinkan events, and open up the pages of the
FGL newsletter Spring 2026 edition!



LOOKING BACK AT THE TOHOKU UNIVERSITY SPRING FESTIVAL
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A Resounding Success: Looking Back at the Tohoku University Spring Festival

Pradipta Kumar, Alicia Adrian (editor)

On April 11th and 12th, the campus grounds were alive, filled with energy, laughter, and a brilliant display of community spirit as Tohoku University hosted its annual Spring Festival. It was an amazing occasion that brought together students, faculty, staff, and even Sendai residents; a powerful reminder of the vibrant and international community we share.

As a member of the organizing committee, I helped to arrange the campus grounds and plan the club rooms. The two days were truly full of enthusiasm, and from morning till dusk, the festival grounds were packed with attendees eager to celebrate the new academic season after a busy start to the semester.

Clubs and Circles: Student clubs and circles were the centerpiece of the event. About 100 student clubs and circles showcased their activities and were actively recruiting new students. I was in charge of lecture hall planning, finding the right way to arrange the clubs so that students could find booths they liked easily.

Although it was only a two-day event, we started preparations a month in advance to ensure smooth operations. After the organizing committee was formed, we chose our roles. Interestingly, this was the first time an international student joined the organizing committee. We had weekly meetings and training sessions on how to handle everything properly.

The stamp rally was fun, with students being given different stamps depending on how many clubs they visited, with some prizes at the end. The performances by the Brass Band, NFJO, and other music clubs were also especially wonderful. My personal favorite was seeing some of the clubs bring out their race cars, yachts, and—how could I forget—the glider from our flying club! All the students had been eagerly waiting for this event, and welcome parties were happening everywhere.

Dynamic Student Performances: Our university clubs and circles took center stage, delivering unforgettable performances. From high-energy dance routines and live music sets to traditional Japanese martial arts demonstrations, the creativity and talent of Tohoku's student body were on full display. Strong winds on the day made it challenging to keep the tents steady, and we had to take them down in the end. Running errands and moving heavy things was also quite tiring, but it was a very enjoyable experience overall.

The Spring Festival is more than just two days of fun, serving as an important bridge between the university and students. It provided a perfect setting for international and local Japanese students to bond, share experiences, and build lasting friendships outside the classroom. A huge thank you goes out to the student ambassadors, volunteer leaders, staff, and circle members who worked tirelessly behind the scenes to plan, organize, and manage the logistics. Your dedication ensured the event was safe, sustainable, and welcoming for everyone.

Thank you to everyone who came out and made this year's Spring Festival an unforgettable success. We are already looking forward to the next one!



Spring, Sendai City, History, and Me

Yuan Zihao

As Lu Xun, the father of Modern Chinese Literature, described in one of his famous works "Mr. Fujino," "Sendai was a small market town, very cold in the winter, with as yet no Chinese students studying there." Though it isn't as cold as I expected, this city still shows me how the strong winds of the season can be quite chilly. Additionally, Sendai City is now crowded every day in places such as Sendai Station and Aobadori Ichibancho, with both locals and people from other parts of the world.

As winter leaves, spring comes. This is the first time I have experienced spring in Sendai: special, beautiful, and very different from my hometown. On the way to campus every day, I enjoy the scenery while standing in the crowded city bus. One day, a sentence came to my mind saying, "Spring in this city comes and leaves secretly, along with the rising temperature and the recovery of everything."

At the beginning of April, as the new semester arrived, the city was awash with light green leaves and sakura blossoms. Simply getting off the subway at Omachi Nishi-koen Station, the blossoming of cherry trees surprised me. More than 100 years ago, the famous local poet and composer, Doi Bansui, wrote in his song "The Moon over the Ruined Castle (荒城之月 (こうじょうのつき)):" "At the high tower in spring, a banquet among the flowers; the shadow [of the moon] falls upon the passing sake cups." The real-world inspirations of this "high tower" referred to a castle located in the northern part of Japan, possibly Sendai castle, and the "flowers" referred especially to the sakura blossoming. The "historical" depiction in this song and the spring I experienced here are not so different. With the breeze, sakura petals flutter down onto people's shoulders. In their laughter the heart of the season peeks through. Around Kawauchi campus, the sakura trees around the tennis courts also show their blossoms. Picture going for a walk with friends, the white and light pink petals drifting in the clouds, then falling along the path you're walking through. It is breathtaking!

With May, the light green becomes darker as the sakura slowly fades away. The city of Sendai has been known as the "City of Trees" since the Edo period, the time of Date Masamune. Crows and other animals also become active this season. It is comforting to sit among the trees anywhere in the city, stopping to read a book or even completing class assignments while feeling the unique scent of nature. Another notable event in May in Sendai is the "Aoba Matsuri". In English, it is the Festival of Green Leaves. As one of the wards of the city is also called Aoba Ward, the festival and the ward's name fit the very zelkova trees and their fresh greenery in this city. Held on the third weekend this year, the festival includes "Yoi Matsuri," the eve of the festival, with the traditional "Sendai Suzume Odori" dance. The main day is "Hon Matsuri" with festival floats in the "Yamaboko" parade. (Students from Tohoku University were invited by Fujisaki to attend this parade as well!) There is a long, long history behind this event: it is said that the Aoba Matsuri began in 1655 and was revived in 1985. In my view, the festival not only shows the celebration of the greenery we have in this scenic city, but also represents people's happiness, energy and expectation for the new year in this thriving season.

To conclude, spring in Sendai, in my view, always shows what nature should be like in its most observable way. The festival shows the happiness of the energetic citizens dancing, singing, and gathering together wishing for a meaningful year!

Spring into experience: finding internships in university

Mamnun Murshed Anam

As the snow melts away and the sakura blooms, the harsh winter winds soften to usher in a new spring semester. With the rising temperature comes a flurry of plans for the coming year. Some of us soon to be entering our third or final years may already be wondering what we can do now to improve our prospects both during university and after graduation. Internships are one of the best ways to step into a professional environment, explore industries firsthand, and get a feel for what life is really like beyond classrooms and lecture halls.

For many students, especially international students like us, the process can feel a little intimidating at first. We are not always sure where to start, how to apply, or whether our qualifications are enough. If your Japanese is not quite where you want it to be yet, the whole process can feel even more daunting. However, the reality is that many of the resources needed to get started are already available both online and around campus. The challenge is simply learning how to make use of the opportunities already around you.

One of the biggest sources of support at Tohoku University is the Tohoku University Career Support Office. Every semester, the office organizes seminars specifically designed to help international students on the English-track navigate the Japanese job market. These sessions range from job-hunting workshops and alumni networking events to seminars focused on understanding Japanese workplace culture and professional expectations. On top of that, the office actively facilitates internship opportunities during semester breaks, giving students valuable exposure to real working environments.

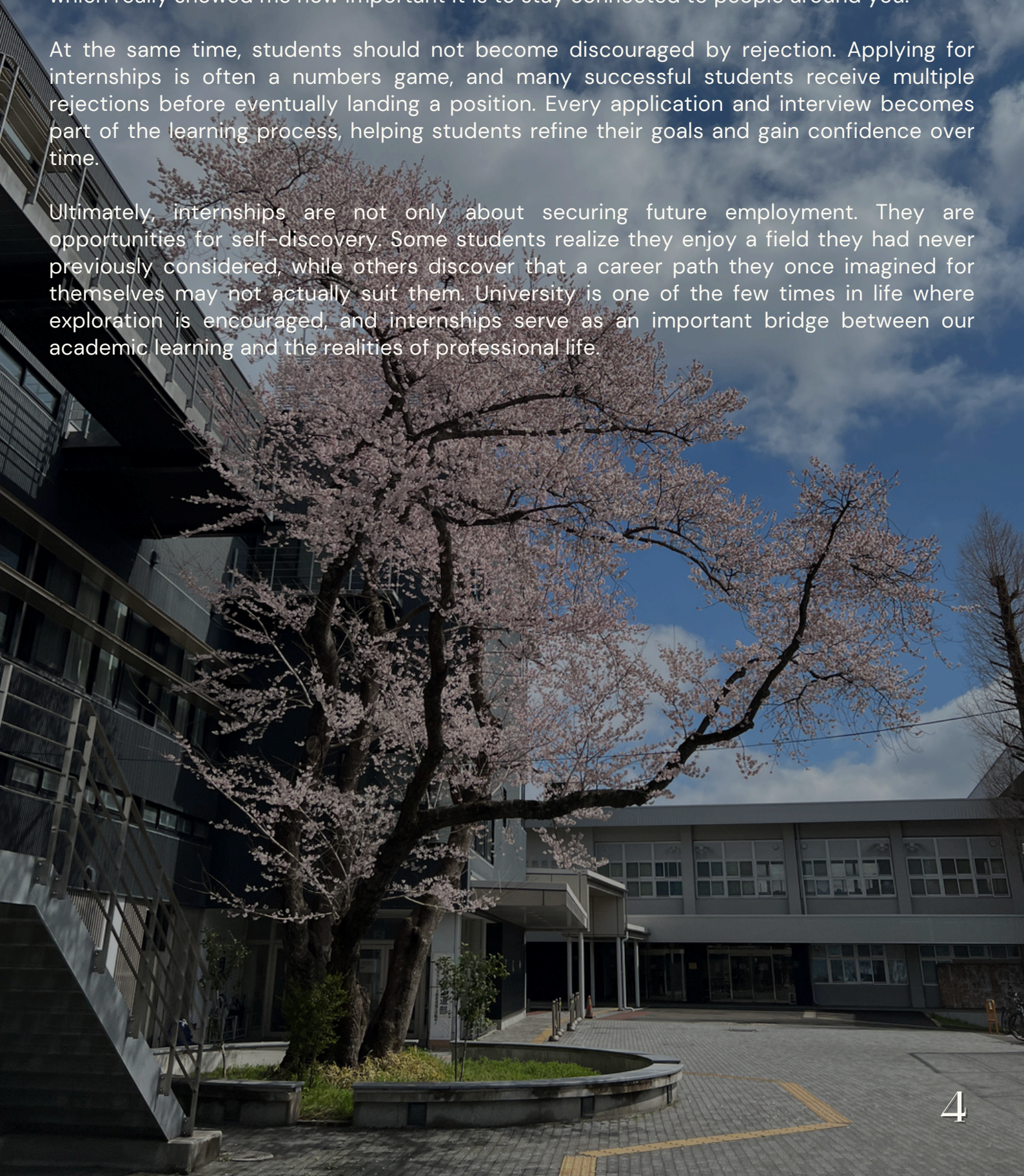
That being said, language ability remains one of the biggest hurdles for many international students. While many internships with Japanese organizations typically require at least a JLPT N3 qualification, that should not stop you from trying. From personal experience, even students who may not formally possess the certification — but have a practical understanding of the language — can still succeed in applying and participating. Confidence and a willingness to communicate genuinely go a long way.

Beyond career support services, there are also opportunities to gain experience through research. Organizations such as the Frontier Research Institute for Interdisciplinary Sciences (FRIS) at Tohoku University provide students with opportunities to engage directly with academic research. Through initiatives such as the Undergraduate Research Work Opportunity (URO) program, students can work alongside mentors on active research projects and gain firsthand exposure to academic and professional research environments. FRIS also recruits students as Administrative Assistants (AA), providing another way to gain experience while becoming more involved in the university community.

Of course, not every opportunity comes directly through the university. We can go the personal route, scouring various websites and social media for an internship more in line with ourselves. While this approach usually takes a lot more time and effort, the internships you randomly come across yourself often feel the most rewarding in the end. Having a strong social network also comes in handy in these situations. Friends, seniors, professors, and acquaintances can often provide information about opportunities that may not be widely advertised. Personally, I found out about my previous internship through a friend, which really showed me how important it is to stay connected to people around you.

At the same time, students should not become discouraged by rejection. Applying for internships is often a numbers game, and many successful students receive multiple rejections before eventually landing a position. Every application and interview becomes part of the learning process, helping students refine their goals and gain confidence over time.

Ultimately, internships are not only about securing future employment. They are opportunities for self-discovery. Some students realize they enjoy a field they had never previously considered, while others discover that a career path they once imagined for themselves may not actually suit them. University is one of the few times in life where exploration is encouraged, and internships serve as an important bridge between our academic learning and the realities of professional life.



The History of Rugby in Japan and Tohoku University

Akshat Fendar

Rugby is a sport with a history of just over 200 years, and Japan has been part of that history for around 100 years. It was initially introduced in 1866 by expatriates living in Yokohama. This, however, was limited to the foreign community. As the sport expanded throughout the country, it led to the formation of the Japanese Rugby Football Union in 1926. The Tohoku University Rugby Football Club (TURFC) was also established in the same year. Therefore, this year officially marks 100 years of union rugby in Japan and at Tohoku University!

So what is rugby? Rugby is a continuous contact sport played with an oval ball. Points are primarily scored by grounding the ball in the opponent's in-goal area (called a try), though kicks through the posts also contribute to the score. It is played with 15 players on each team. Eight of them are part of the forwards, and seven are part of the backline. The forwards are the physically bigger players who are responsible for most of the physical work, including carrying the ball into contact, tackling opposition players, and the scrum. The backline consists of the smaller, faster players, responsible for managing the flow of the game and scoring. The matches are played with 40-minute halves, and the players do not wear any protection other than a mouthguard.

Rugby made its way into Japanese universities in 1899 through Edward B. Clarke. He was a professor at Keio University and introduced the game to the students. It quickly became popular, as the spirit of the Meiji Restoration aligned well with rugby's reputation as a gentleman's game. This was seen as a way forward for Japan's modernization.

Today, Japan is known as one of the powerhouses of the rugby world. They held the 2019 World Cup, where the Brave Blossoms (Japan's men's team) made it to the quarterfinals for the first time. This helped boost rugby's popularity in Japan significantly. Next year, they will be heading to Australia for the 2027 World Cup.

The Tohoku University Rugby Football Club can also be considered a powerhouse in Tohoku and Japan. TURFC plays in the 1st division of the Tohoku league and always aims to compete in the national championship. Whether you are a newcomer to the sport or a long-time fan, I hope you can support TURFC and rugby in Japan as we kick off a new century!



Thank you for reading the spring 2026 issue of the FGL Community Newsletter! See you next season!

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