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# JLGC NEWS LETTER



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CLAIR FELLOWSHIP

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## 1. CLAIR Fellowship Exchange Program 2015

The CLAIR Fellowship Exchange Program 2015 was held from October 18 to October 28 in 2015.

This program has been affording senior state and local government officials an opportunity to experience Japanese government administration first hand. This year the program was held in Tokyo and Miyagi Prefecture.



### Theme: Rebuilding and Revitalization in Miyagi, Japan



Miyagi was damaged by the terrible earthquake and tsunami disaster on March 11th, 2011. Now Miyagi is striving to rebuild itself and is planning the revitalization of its regional economy. It appreciates all the great support it receives

from everyone in the world and would like to share its vision of "Creative Recovery".

Participants exchanged their opinions, especially on rebuilding from a disaster. Also they experienced the beauty of Miyagi scenery and immersed themselves in traditional Japanese culture.

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(CLAIR, NY)**

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**Ms. Mary Wild**

Chief Financial Officer, National  
Conference of State Legislatures



In October of 2015 I had the distinct pleasure of participating in the annual CLAIR Local Government Exchange and Cooperation Seminar that toured locations in Tokyo and the Miyagi Prefecture. While some of my NCSL colleagues had participated in previous year's events, I really didn't have any idea of the breadth or depth of the experience and how it would shape my understanding of natural disasters and the resilience of the Japanese people.

Starting in Tokyo and learning about the Japanese system of government gave all of us a good foundation to use in understanding the inspections we were to make in the upcoming days. And the next 9 days went by far too quickly.

Our trips to each area affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake Disaster of 2011 allowed us to see the destruction first hand and understand the herculean efforts required to rebuild and restore buildings and communities. We also saw how local, prefecture, and central governmental units work together to continue the reconstruction efforts.

By far the most important take away from the trip for me was learning about the culture of the Japanese people. From the exactness of scheduled visits to the exchange of business cards, all details were planned and executed with great precision.

We learned together about opportunities to plan for natural disasters and received practical information and suggestions to take back to our respective organizations.

I would like to express my appreciation to the Miyagi Prefecture government and the CLAIR staff for their hospitality and suggestions that made the trip a once in a lifetime experience!

**Mr. Kamanzi Graham Kalisa**

Director of Overseas Voting Initiative,  
The Council of State Governments



How do I even begin to describe my trip to Japan with JLGC's 2015 CLAIR Fellowship Exchange Program? It was one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life to learn so much in such a short time from Japanese public policy leaders as well as everyday Japanese citizens. If there were a word to describe Japan as a whole, it would be respectful. Japan is a country that maintains a culture that displays reverence of fine food as the food is meticulously prepared and served. The country also maintains a sense of reverence for nature, rules and humanity as clearly evidenced by our group's visit to Miyagi Prefecture, to learn lessons from the March 11, 2011 earthquake and subsequent tsunami. I would like to thank the Japan Local Government Center and the Council of State Governments for providing me with this incredible experience. I will continue to share my Japanese experience with my colleagues, friends and family.

**Mr. Riki Hokama**

Past President, National Association of Counties



I participated in the CLAIR study tour of Miyagi Prefecture, an area that was devastated in March 2011 by a Magnitude 9.0 earthquake followed by a tsunami. There were over 10,000 human deaths, destruction of over 83,000 residences, and heavy damage to over 155,000 residences. The highest casualties were among the elderly. Major damage was from the tsunami flood. For example in Onagawa Town, the tsunami wave was as high as a 5 story building, and 3,000 out of 4,500 buildings were destroyed. The 10-year Disaster Recovery Plan implementation is mid-way in the three stage program- "Restoration" (2011-2013), "Reconstruction" (2014-2017), and "Development" (2018-2020).

Here's a few impressions gleaned from this study tour:

- Strong government leadership is evident in the recovery efforts. Government officials work closely with residents to understand and maintain a balance between preserving historical assets and constructing a new disaster-resistant community development model. Government officials receive high marks for the timely, efficient and compassionate response in the disaster recovery.
- The repair and/or rebuilding of infrastructure and major public facilities involve creative public-private initiatives that allow national and local governments to tap into private sector expertise and share the burden of financial costs. The management of

the Sendai Airport as a "concession-type" private finance initiative (PFI) is an example of such a public-private partnership. This model could also be adapted to finance and manage the re-building of major public facilities, including expressways, airports, museums, and housing.

- The attitude of government officials and residents is to be better prepared for the next disaster and keep lessons learned on the "top of mind". I was very impressed by the resilience of residents and how they put the welfare of neighbors ahead of individual needs.

In closing, I'd like to thank CLAIR for the opportunity to participate in this study tour of Miyagi Prefecture. It was an eye-opening and memorable experience!

**Mr. Pete Auger**

City Manager, City of Novi, MI



What a great experience. This trip lived up to everything I thought it would. The people in Japan were very hospitable, overly polite and very efficient. Everything was laid out for us and we were kept on schedule the entire time.

Our tours, or inspections, were all very informative and we had great access to decision makers at all levels of governance. It was very humbling as we studied what happened on the eleventh of March 2011. I was also impressed with some key decisions being made moving forward that will help reduce the loss of life in future events.

**Ms. Melodee Colbert Kean**

President, National League of Cities



Once in a lifetime you get the opportunity to experience the beauty and amazement of another country. You get the chance to gain a better understanding of her governmental structure and to be the recipient of her gracious hospitality. Such an opportunity was afforded to me through the amazing offering of the Japan CLAIR Exchange Program.

This exchange meant a great deal as my city also was hit with a natural disaster, an F5 tornado, May 22, 2011, just two months after Japan's great earthquake and tsunami. I had the opportunity to witness the resilience, determination and rebuilding strategies implemented there, and to contrast and compare our recovery plans. One thing we have in common recovering from such disasters, is the fortitude and drive to rebuild and redesign our cities to be even better than before, and to withstand the future impact of events of such magnitude. This can only be accomplished through a can-do attitude, which is clearly evident in Japanese citizens. The focus of city leadership is critical in guiding the citizens towards the vision of redesigning and rebuilding of communities once again to become thriving business and residential areas.

From the beautiful landscapes of the garden areas, the breathtaking water views and temple visits of Matsushima. To the amazing rebuilding efforts underway in Onagawa, the serene view

overlooking Sendai and the ever present gracious hospitality of the CLAIR staff, the assistants and the citizens, this Exchange was packed with education, appreciation and amazement.

Thank You for an amazing experience to share with my hometown, Joplin (Mo), my National League of Cities family and my family!

**Mr. Khashayar Alaei**

Sr. Management Analyst, City of Palo Alto, CA



On behalf of the International City/County Managers Association and the City of Palo Alto, I would like to thank CLAIR for providing me an experience that has had a profound and positive impact on my life. It was truly a privilege to visit Japan to learn about the government structure and actions taken to recover from the Great East Japan Earthquake. The staff at CLAIR were very gracious and did an outstanding job with our itinerary. I am eternally grateful.

The trip was an emotional rollercoaster for me. At moments I was excited to meet with government officials, tour sites, learn about operational issues as well as the culture nuances. But at moments, it was also very sad. For example, visiting Onagawa and standing in the city center while watching YouTube clips of the tsunami really placed the disaster in perspective. To this day, I think about that moment and what the people of Japan have gone through. The experience was life changing. Japan will always have a special place in my heart.

**Mr. Chris Wray**

President, Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario



It was indeed an honour to participate in the 2015 CLAIR program and exchange. My experience in participating in this program created memories that will last a lifetime and will no doubt be one of the top accomplishments of my career.

The highlight of the exchange was certainly the people who were involved. From our wonderful hosts, to people we met along the way; somehow this allowed me to grow as a person. There are few words that can describe how well we were received from the time we arrived in Japan. Our hosts were very well organized, friendly and accommodating. The CLAIR staff made sure that we made the most of the short time that we were in Japan and I will never forget their efforts.

The theme of this exchange; recovering from the Great Eastern Japan Earthquake was of particular interest to me as my own community has had its share of challenges due to natural disasters; although certainly nothing like the magnitude of what we witnessed on the exchange. The measures taken by such a large metropolis like Tokyo were indeed impressive as were the types and complexity of the technology used.

The efforts of the people of Sendai City and Miyagi Prefecture to recover from such a devastating event were indeed impressive and spoke highly of the resilience of the Japanese people. In particular I could not help but be moved by the story of the small town of Onagawa. Only slightly larger than my own community, we witnessed a recovery in action, an entire town being reconstructed from the debris and devastation left behind by a natural disaster that many people will never experience. Lastly, our tour of beautiful and historical Matsushima was a true experience on how a town so dependent on tourism can rise from devastation to offer a unique experience that can be found in few places around the world.

I will never forget the many stories that we heard and experienced during the exchange and I won't forget the friendly, accommodating nature of the Japanese people, in particular our CLAIR hosts and the many employees of Miyagi Prefecture. Most importantly, I won't soon forget that while in Canada we plan for possible disasters in each and every community across the country, in Japan those same plans are being made for a disaster that is on the horizon.

I am humbled and truly grateful for my experience.

**Mr. Dale Mikkelsen**

Director of Development, Simon Fraser UniverCity Community Trust



It's now been about 3 weeks since my return back to Canada from the 2015 CLAIR Local Government Fellowship Exchange Program. While only back a short time, I already miss, with fondness, our hosts from CLAIR, and the individual venue hosts that we met throughout our journeys from Tokyo and throughout the Miyagi Prefecture. I honestly did not know what to expect from the exchange program when I was first contacted by the Canadian Urban Institute as a potential representative, given our experience at UniverCity in Burnaby, BC, Canada with building sustainable and resilient infrastructure and communities. I was unsure what I may be able to specifically contribute to a part of Japan that is still recovering from the devastation of the Japan Great East Earthquake and Tsunami of 2011.

Well, I was right. I could not have known what to expect. However, what I received was 10 days of profound learning, sharing, and understanding – both of a remarkable culture and an amazing government structure and relationship with its people. Through the lens of disaster and devastation and the urgency to rebuild, we were privileged to see Japan at its most raw and vulnerable state.

When we hear of Japan as being “internal” and “private” we think of it as “closed”. Rather, it is not demonstrable or overt in its emotion and expression – but by no means is it closed and doors and hearts were opened to us. Through the stories we experienced during our journey, I not only learned about how government can and should respond to disaster, but I also gained a respect for the Japanese way.

The immediacy of response.

The discipline and control of those affected.

The deep care for the most vulnerable – the youngest and the oldest.

The respect for loss, coupled with the need for immediacy.

The support for strong leadership.

The willingness to accept change.

The understanding that forward is the only direction in a time of rebuilding.

At the end of the trip, I hoped that I was able to offer some insight and some thoughts from our practices here in Canada and at UniverCity. I hoped I was able to speak to innovative infrastructure, decentralized systems, and sustainable building. But all of that had little on what I took away from the trip – the importance and value of people and the respect for their leadership by those being led, if they are treated well and fairly. This is the lesson from Japan for me and something the Japanese do so well. I can only hope the CLAIR Fellowship Exchange Program continues each year, and that 9 or 10 lucky people from North America will also seize this opportunity to learn so much and be treated so well.

**Mr. Jeff L. Reeb**

Office of Emergency Management, Los Angeles County, CA



As an emergency manager for Los Angeles County, one that noted seismologist Dr. Lucy Jones with the US Geological Survey has described as *...the most seismically at risk large urban area in the United States...*, it was with keen interest that I departed for the CLAIR Study Tour of Japan. Japan is recognized worldwide as the most earthquake prepared nation on earth. To study and learn from the best on how they responded to, and are recovering from, the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami would be an invaluable opportunity for me as an emergency management professional.

Over the course of nine days I was educated on the governmental structure of Japan, and on how the central government and the prefectures in concert with the local municipalities are rebuilding the areas devastated by the tsunami.

Also, how they are not just rebuilding what was there, but are reaching forward to build to the future and ensuring that the reconstructed communities are more inviting and secure, and how they are investing across the social and economic strata to stimulate the reestablishment of local economies in the affected areas so that those displaced by the tsunami can return to their communities and prosper. As important as these examples are in providing recovery models that can be replicated in Los Angeles, I was also exposed to the wonderful people of Japan. The CLAIR staff who conducted the Study Tour were outstanding ambassadors for their nation and the CLAIR Local Government Exchange and Cooperation program.

The Tour concluded with an opportunity to share the numerous lessons learned and insights gained between the Tour group and the senior leadership of the Miyagi Prefecture Government. This two way exchange validated the principle that government leaders worldwide face similar challenges and through mutual cooperation and collaboration we can share the best practices which will allow us to improve the quality of life for the people we serve. For this rare and valuable opportunity, I am extremely grateful to professionals at CLAIR and the Miyagi Prefectural Government of Japan.

## *2. New York Times Travel Show 2016*

Fumiko Tatemichi, Assistant Director, Representative of Hiroshima City

The New York Times Travel Show was held at the Jacob Javits Convention Center from January 8<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup>. Over 500 exhibitors including hotels, tour agencies and train companies from all over the world attended this event and showed off their travel information. JLGC staff members also attended this event on January 10<sup>th</sup> as part of the Japan Booth of JNTO and introduced their home areas.



During this event, not only a lot of people who are planning to go to Japan but also those who are simply interested in Japanese culture visited our booth in order to get a variety of information.

Of course, the famous cities for tourists are Tokyo, Osaka and Kyoto. However, we are also eager to introduce local cities which are not well-known yet, but are worth a visit. So, this time we focused on four sites, Miyagi, Wakayama, Hiroshima and Matsue City. Some people don't know where these cities are located, how to get there, or how long it takes from Tokyo or Kyoto, so we explained to them by using a map of Japan and brochures sent from each city. Since the Shinkansen (bullet train) runs through many prefectures, Miyagi is just 1.5 hours from Tokyo and Hiroshima is 2 hours from Kyoto. It is fast, safe and comfortable, and it is always on time, which is an important point, especially during a trip. Wakayama Prefecture, located south of Osaka, is surrounded by both beautiful mountains and the ocean, and it is blessed with good food such as fresh seafood and juicy fruits. Also, they created their own ramen style, called Wakayama-ramen. Matsue City (Shimane Prefecture) is located north of Hiroshima and is surrounded by waterways, so it is called "The City of Water".



Matsue Castle has just become a National Treasure in 2014. Also, they have created their own traditional Japanese sweets, called Wagashi. These types of Japanese sweets are amazingly fine and beautiful.

I was impressed to know that so many people were considering Japan as their next trip destination. We are always happy to share information about Japan and hope many tourists visit Japan in the near future.

### *3. Intern Report*

Hiroaki Hagiwara, Representative of Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department

This past October, I spent an unforgettable month exploring and learning about New York as a trainee. It was my first time living overseas for so long and I could not have been more excited for the opportunity to visit all of the wonderful and historical sites surrounding me.

[Bridges in New York]

In a book, on TV, on a postcard, or perhaps in person, chances are many have seen or heard of the world famous Brooklyn Bridge in one way or another. From reading many guidebooks, I too, knew of its excellent design and world-renowned significance as one of history's remarkable architectural achievements. I had been longing to visit the bridge since I was a teen, but seeing the actual bridge with my own eyes surpassed my expectations.



The moment I found out that I would be staying in New York, I told myself that this was my chance to walk across the Brooklyn Bridge, and that is exactly what I did. To say that my experience was amazing does not reflect the grandeur of the bridge.

To top off my excursion, I also walked across the Williamsburg Bridge and drove across the Manhattan Bridge on an open top bus. These bridges were just as impressive, constructed with such detail despite their large scale. The bridge technology is comparable to modern day designs, which makes it quite amazing that these were built over 100 years ago. To say the least, I was extremely impressed with the bridges of New York.

[Bridges in Tokyo]

After returning to Japan, I began to reflect on my hometown and decided to visit two famous bridges in Tokyo: the Rainbow Bridge and the Tokyo Gate Bridge.

The Rainbow Bridge is a suspension bridge crossing the northern end of Tokyo Bay between Shibaura Pier and the Odaiba waterfront development in Minato, Tokyo. It was completed in 1993. It carries three transportation lines on two decks. The upper deck carries the expressway, while the lower deck carries the Yurikamome rapid transit system, walkways, and prefectural road. The Tokyo Gate Bridge, which was completed in 2012, is one of the newest bridges in Tokyo. The truss cantilever bridge stretches across Tokyo Bay, and is distinguishable by its unique appearance, looking like two dinosaurs facing each other.



The photo was taken from a manmade island called *Sea Forest*, which adjoins Tokyo Gate Bridge. *Sea Forest* was created as a project to turn an artificial island into a forest, and though it is not open to the general public yet, I had the opportunity to visit through an event. This is one of my favorite roads to drive through because it is traffic free.

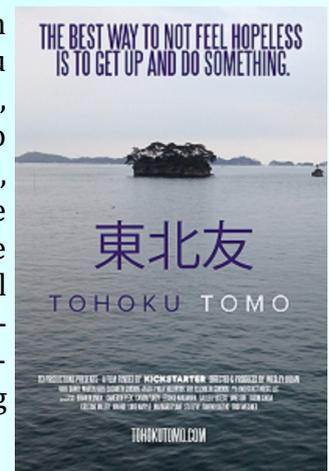
The island will eventually open up as a park, and for the Tokyo Olympics in 2020 areas will serve as the grounds for events such as cross country, rowing, canoe kayaking, and mountain biking. *Sea Forest* is sure to be a new sightseeing spot and I could not be more excited!

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#### 4. JETAA Alaska-Tohoku Tomo

Christopher Vaughan, President, JETAA Alaska

On March 11, 2011, Monty Dickson was one of two teachers with the Japan Exchange and Teaching Program killed in the Tohoku earthquake and tsunami. While I did not know Monty personally, Monty was from Anchorage, Alaska, which is where I also live. While attending the JETAA National Conference in Seattle, Washington, in September 2014, I had the opportunity to view the film, Tohoku Tomo, which is a documentary telling the story of true friendship and commitment to Japan's recovery by the international community following the earthquake and tsunami. It was a combination of wanting to share Monty's story along with the Tohoku recovery efforts, which would eventually lead to a local film screening here in Anchorage.



On February 29, 2016, the JET Alumni Association of Alaska hosted the screening of Tohoku Tomo at the BP Energy Center in Anchorage. The screening exceeded our expectations with a near full capacity of almost 120 people. Before the start of the film, we had the pleasure of showing a video message from CLAIR New York, which was well received by everyone in attendance. After the screening, we held a question & answer session with the film's producers, Wesley Julian and Daniel Martin, along with a preview of the 113 Project. The 113 Project is a series of small videos that focuses on more stories of friendships and recovery in Tohoku with hopes of creating an interactive website that attracts visitors to Tohoku to volunteer and / or visit there on vacation. During the filming of the 113 Project, Wesley and Daniel met Teiichi Sato, a seed shop owner in the city of Rikuzentakata. Mr. Sato previously took part in Monty's weekly English conversation classes and the two of them got to know each other quite well. Mr. Sato provided a message to Monty as part of the video, which everyone was able to view for a few minutes as a preview. Monty's sister, Shelley Frederickson then gave a moving and heartfelt presentation about her brother and the city of Rikuzentakata, which is where he was assigned as a JET. The evening ended with a reception hosted by the Consular Office of Japan in Anchorage, which allowed the guests to become more acquainted with one another. The reception resulted in a great turn out with many people staying, and guests were able to discuss further about the film with each other and also with Wesley and Daniel. New friendships were formed, and a sharing of Japanese culture and spirit was able to take place with all that had opportunity to attend the screening.

This screening could not have been possible without the generous support of all the local JETAA Alaska volunteers, CLAIR New York, Consular Office of Japan in Anchorage, and the Japanese Society of Alaska. It was such a pleasure to have everyone so engaged with the film and each other. While the screening has ended, JETAA Alaska looks forward to continuing to share these stories of Monty and Tohoku while also doing our part to be a bridge between Japan and our local communities here in Alaska.

# 113 PROJECT

## RECLAIMING TOHOKU

A Series of Short Documentary Films Highlighting Tohoku  
View at [www.113Project.org](http://www.113Project.org)

From the creative team of the documentary *Tohoku Tomo*, an IDFA 2015 Finalist with over 30 domestic and international screenings to date, comes the 113 Project, a short film series inviting you to rediscover Tohoku through the eyes of young adults, local businesses, and communities rebuilding their lives and working towards the future.

Featuring over a dozen interviews and stories embodying hope and perseverance, these short films showcase the warmth and beauty of the region while sharing the voices of people who want to let you know how life is today.

The short film series will be available at [www.113Project.org](http://www.113Project.org) beginning March 7, 2016. For questions, please contact [info@tohokutomo.com](mailto:info@tohokutomo.com). The public is encouraged to use the hashtag, **#TTWeek**, for Tohoku Tomo Week, where thoughts, photos, and memories of Tohoku can be shared on social media.

### **5. Tohoku's Recovery and Reconstruction from the Great East Japan Earthquake**

Koichi Matsuda, Assistant Director, Representative of Iwate Prefecture

Five years have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011.

Most of the infrastructure in Tohoku (the hardest-hit prefectures of Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima) has been restored. Housing reconstruction is in progress. The number of people still not returned to the disaster area has decreased from over 470,000 to about 174,000 as of February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016.

Compared to Iwate and Miyagi, the reconstruction of Fukushima will take a longer time. However, there are some signs of positive developments there as well as the level of radiation from the accident at the Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant reduces naturally and because of the decontamination efforts. The evacuation order for Tamura City (as of April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014), Kawauchi Village (as of October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2014), and Naraha Town (as of September 5<sup>th</sup>, 2015) has been lifted.

Also, the Tohoku region continues to work on providing more and more accurate information about the safety and healthy quality of its products (particularly agricultural products), whose reputation had suffered from the disaster. This should encourage visitors to come to the region as well as people purchasing and enjoying the region's foods.

Because the local governments' ultimate goal in the reconstruction efforts is to revitalize local areas, Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima are focusing on reviving the region's industry. We hope that the prefectures will be able to attain the goal.

#### **Reconstruction progress over five years in the Tohoku region - A few facts:**

- Providing Health and Living Support
  - The number of people having not returned to the affected area has decreased from over 470,000 to approximately 174,000 as of February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2016.



Sanriku coastal road (Highway)  
Source: The Iwate Nippo Co., Ltd.



Public housing in Rikuzentakata, Iwate  
Source: The Reconstruction Agency

- Restoration of Public Infrastructure & Houses
  - The removal of disaster debris has almost been completed.
  - Approximately 9,000 new homes will be completed (**45.2%** of all planned homes) by the end of March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016.
  - Over 17,000 public housing projects for the disaster-affected area will be completed (**59.2%** of all planned public housing projects) by the end of March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2016.
- Recovery of industry and jobs (As of January, 2016)
  - **74%** of the Tsunami-affected farmlands have recovered sufficiently to be cultivated once again .
  - **85%** of seafood processing operations have restarted businesses.
  - Approximately **45%** of companies have recovered to their pre-earthquake level of activity.
  - Job-offer rates have recovered to more jobs per job-seeker (from 0.45 to more than 1.00) in the three prefectures.

For more information, please look at the Reconstruction Agency's website:  
[http://www.reconstruction.go.jp/english/topics/Progress\\_to\\_date/index.html](http://www.reconstruction.go.jp/english/topics/Progress_to_date/index.html)

Fukushima Prefectural Government, Situation of evacuation zones:

[http://www.pref.fukushima.lg.jp.e.od.hp.transer.com/site/portal/list271-840.html](http://www.pref.fukushima.lg.jp/e.od.hp.transer.com/site/portal/list271-840.html)

The Reconstruction Agency, The road to recovery: <http://www.reconstruction.go.jp/english/>



New shopping street in Onagawa, Miyagi  
 Source: The Reconstruction Agency



Sanriku Tetsudo Railway in Iwate  
 Source: The Sanriku Tetsudo Railway

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