

**SPEECH BY AMBASSADOR TAKATA**  
**FOR THE OPENING NIGHT OF THE JAPAN FILM FESTIVAL**  
**PARAMOUNT THEATRE, 25 COURTENAY PLACE**  
**THURSDAY, 14 SEPTEMBER 2017 6:15pm**

Mr Paul Eagle, Deputy Mayor of Wellington,

Ms Frances Yamada, President of the Wellington Sakai Association,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good evening,

Thank you all very much for attending this evening. The Embassy of Japan is very pleased to once again be hosting the Japanese Film Festival at the Paramount Cinema, and to welcome you all to tonight's opening, featuring a screening of "Ask This of Rikyu", in cooperation with our local Japan sister cities group, the Wellington Sakai Association.

This year, our Japanese Film Festival is made up of eight recent and very popular Japanese films, spanning across multiple genres. There's history, drama, action, true stories, suspense, and even a romantic comedy. With so much to see, we believe there is really something for everyone. Tickets to all screenings, not only today, but every day of the festival, are completely free of charge.

Tonight's film is a very special movie: a Wellington Japanese Film Festival exclusive! As I mentioned, our screening of "Ask This of Rikyu" is largely due to the hard work and effort of the Wellington Sakai Association. This is because the main character of the film, Sen-no-Rikyu, the grand master of Japanese tea ceremony, was born and raised in Sakai City in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. As Ambassador, it is always wonderful to see the concerted efforts of our important sister city relationships bear fruit, and bring together so many like-minded people who love and appreciate Japanese culture. I hope that you will come away from tonight with an interest to learn more about the connection between our two wonderful cities, Wellington and Sakai, and perhaps, even join as a member to support them both in the future.

The Embassy of Japan has been lucky enough to host three of its film festivals here at the Paramount Cinema. However, as you may know, this year will mark its last, as this much-loved institution will be closing its doors for the final time at the end of September. As such, I hope you will make an effort to come and visit it again after tonight, to appreciate the historical features and architecture one more time – perhaps, at another of our line-up later this week?

Thank you, and please enjoy.