



**REEL-TO-4K.** A film-process technician checks the digitalized film of a Godzilla movie at Tokyo Laboratory Ltd. in Tokyo. At the humble laboratory, Godzilla, including the 1954 black-and-white original, is stomping back with a digital makeover that delivers four times the image quality of high definition. Experts say the chemical reactions used to make old movies stored far greater detail than was visible with the limited projection technology of the era, as well as with subsequent digital updates. (AP Photo/Eugene Hoshiko)

## Godzilla stomps back in ultra HD, wires intact

By Yuri Kageyama  
AP Business Writer

**T**OKYO — At a humble Tokyo laboratory, Godzilla, including the 1954 black-and-white original, is stomping back with a digital makeover that delivers four times the image quality of high definition.

The effort with “4K” technology is carefully removing scratches and discoloration from the films and also unearthing hidden information on the reel-to-reel.

Experts say the chemical reactions used to make old movies stored far greater detail than was visible with the limited projection technology of the era, as well as with subsequent digital updates.

If all the hidden information of a reel-to-reel is ever brought out, quality would approximate 8K, they say.

Only one minute from the original film and from each of the sequels has been turned into 4K so far, but the results are stunning enough.

Faded, blurry, yellowing footage of the radiation-breathing creature that emerged from the Pacific after atomic-bomb testing turns sharp, clear, and vivid. It almost looks like state-of-the-art animation.

It’s better than the original, said Toshifumi Shimizu of Tokyo Laboratory Co., the studio that undertook the painstaking effort.

“You can feel the impact of the bodies banging into each other under the suits,” he said in an interview with The Associated Press.

He said many scenes are more real and emotionally moving than what is achieved by today’s computer-graphics manipulation, widespread in Hollywood block-

busters.

The details of the cityscape models, the bumpy skin of Godzilla, and the metallic shine of the robots are revealed as they once were.

The craftsmen at the lab made a point to keep visible the wires from which the flying monsters hung. The goal was to stay true to the intention of the original.

In turning Godzilla films into 4K, each frame of the reel-to-reel is scanned by a special machine. Each frame is then examined for blotches and other damage that has crept in over the last 60 years. Any problems with a frame are fixed on a computer, one by one, by a film-processing specialist.

Shoko Ideriha, one of the specialists, said the team pieced together the best segments, working with the only three copies left of the 1954 *Godzilla*. She compared fixing film to being a doctor treating a patient.

The big catch is that 4K, also known as ultra-high definition, or Ultra HD, can’t be seen in most homes or theaters yet.

For one, you would need a 4K television, which is not cheap. Sony’s 85-inch model sells for \$25,000, although prices are gradually coming down overall.

More crucial still, 4K broadcasting is virtually nonexistent. In Japan, it’s available only in limited test programming.

But believers swear that it will become the standard of the not-so-distant future. Other movie classics, such as *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Gone With the Wind*, have turned 4K.

What 4K promises for movie classics is astounding, said Takashi Sawa, of Nihon Eiga Satellite Broadcasting Corp., which aired all 28 Toho *Godzilla* classics for the

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## Spirits roam during Hong Kong ghost festival

**HONG KONG (AP)** — Countless hungry and restless ghosts are roaming Hong Kong, and the world, to visit their living descendants, at least according to Chinese convention.

In traditional Chinese belief, the seventh month of the lunar year is reserved for the Hungry Ghost festival, or Yu Lan, a raucous celebration marked by feasts and music. This year the festival began August 10. According to folklore, the ghosts who wander the physical world are ravenous and envious after dying without descendants or because they were not venerated by relatives who are still alive.

The hungry spirits need to be appeased, so ethnic Chinese around the world offer prayers to their deceased relatives along with sticks of joss, or incense. They also burn mock currency known as “hell money” and other paper copies of material wealth such as television sets, mobile phones, and even iPads and iPhones, which the ghosts use when they return to the underworld.

Neighborhoods hold nightly shows of shrill Chinese operas and pop concerts, with the front rows of seats always empty — reserved for the ghosts. The shows are accompanied by extravagant feasts of grilled pork, broiled chicken, rice, and fruit. The offerings are made in the hope



**APPEASING THE SPIRITS.** A woman burns incense in front of a paper reproduction of the “Ghost King” at a makeshift altar during the Hungry Ghost festival in Hong Kong. In traditional Chinese belief, the seventh month of the lunar year is reserved for the festival, a raucous celebration marked by feasts and music. (AP Photo/Vincent Yu)

that the spirits will help them find good jobs, earn good grades, or even win the lottery. The festival peaks on the 15th day of the lunar month — the most auspicious — when families offer cooked food to the ghosts.

## Little League champs return to South Korea

**SEOUL, South Korea (AP)** — The captain of the South Korean team that won the Little League World Series wants to keep winning baseball championships with his friends when they grow up.

After receiving a big welcome on their return, Jae Yeong Hwang said he would like to reunite with his teammates as adults and win the World Baseball Classic (WBC).

“My heart was full. I was happy because I achieved this with my friends,” Hwang said. “I want to win at a big ... a much bigger competition like the WBC (with my teammates).”

More than 200 people gathered at Incheon International Airport holding welcoming placards and handing over flower bouquets to the boys. Many were teammates from domestic teams, who wore baseball uniforms and shouted to their proud teammates.

The South Korean boys, wearing blue shirts and baseball caps, appeared with a big national flag before making Usain Bolt’s trademark victory gesture, the same pose they made after their victory.

The South Koreans, the Asia-Pacific Region champions, beat Chicago 8-4. It was the first South Korean championship since back-to-back wins in 1984 and 1985.



**SEOUL SUCCESS.** South Korean Little League players celebrate after defeating Japan 12-3 at the Little League World Series in South Williamsport, Pennsylvania. After receiving a big welcome on their return to South Korea, Jae Yeong Hwang said he would like to reunite with his teammates as adults and win the World Baseball Classic. (AP Photo/Matt Stocum)

The latest win came as a surprise in South Korea as local baseball and other amateur teams don’t receive much public and media attention. The professional baseball league is still considered to be the country’s most popular sports competition.

No other major welcoming ceremonies were scheduled except for a dinner among players, their parents, and baseball officials, according to baseball officials in Seoul.

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