

Godzilla film director pursuing Japanese spirituality of 1954 original

By Yuri Kageyama
The Associated Press

TOKYO — Godzilla, the nightmarish radiation spewing monster born out of nuclear weapons, has stomped through many movies, including several Hollywood remakes.

Takashi Yamazaki, the director behind the latest Godzilla movie, was determined to bring out what he believes is the essentially Japanese spirituality that characterizes the 1954 original.

In that classic, directed by Ishiro Honda, a man sweated inside a rubber suit and trampled over cityscape miniatures to tell the story of a prehistoric creature mistakenly brought to life by radiation from nuclear testing in the Pacific. The monster in *Godzilla Minus One* is all computer graphics.

“I love the original Godzilla, and I felt I should stay true to that spirit, addressing the issues of war and nuclear weapons,”



said Yamazaki, who also wrote the screenplay and oversaw the computerized special effects.

“There is a concept in Japan called

‘tatarigami.’ There are good gods, and there are bad gods. Godzilla is half-monster, but it’s also half-god.”

The world has been recently thrust into

GODZILLA MINUS ONE. Pictured is a scene from the new Godzilla film, *Godzilla Minus One*. Takashi Yamazaki, the director behind the latest version of *Godzilla*, was determined to bring out what he believes is the essentially Japanese spirituality that characterizes the 1954 original. (Toho International via AP)

a period of uncertainty, with the war in Ukraine and the coronavirus pandemic. It was a mood that fit his supernatural “very Japanese” *Godzilla*, Yamazaki said at the Tokyo International Film Festival, where *Godzilla Minus One* was the closing film. It opened in Japanese theaters last month.

“You have to quiet it down,” he told The Associated Press of *Godzilla*, as if only a prayer can calm or stop the monster — as opposed to trying to kill it.

Set just after Japan’s surrender in World War II, Yamazaki’s rendition predates the original and portrays a nation so devastated by war it’s left with nothing, let alone any weapons to fight off *Godzilla*.

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Gay couple in Nepal becomes the first to officially register same-sex marriage in the country

By Binaj Gurubacharya
The Associated Press

KATHMANDU, Nepal — A gay couple in Nepal became the first in the nation to receive official same-sex marriage status last month. The Himalayan nation is one of the first in Asia to allow it.

“After 23 years of struggle we got this historic achievement, and finally Maya and Surendra got their marriage registered at the local administration office,” said Sunil Babu Pant, an openly gay former parliamentarian and leading LGBTQ+ rights activist.

Pant was present with Surendra Pandey and Maya Gurung when they registered their marriage at the Dorje village council office, located in the mountains west of the capital, Kathmandu.

Earlier this year, Nepal’s supreme court issued an interim order enabling the registration of same-sex marriages for the first time.



Officials had initially refused to register the marriage. The couple and Pant filed cases with the Kathmandu District Court and High Court, but their pleas were rejected.

According to Pant, the Home Ministry made changes in the process enabling all local administration offices to register same-sex marriages.

“It was quite unexpected and it was a positive breeze for us,” Pant said by phone from the village where the couple

HISTORIC ACHIEVEMENT. In this handout photo provided by Sunil Babu Pant, same-sex couple Surendra Pandey, center left, and Maya Gurung, center right, who were married six years ago, pose for a photograph with their marriage registration certificate at Dorje village council office, located in the mountains west of the capital of Kathmandu, Nepal. The couple became the first in the nation to receive official same-sex marriage status. The Himalayan nation is one of the first in Asia to allow it. (Sunil Babu Pant via AP)

was expected to celebrate. The couple married six years ago at a temple following Hindu tradition, with a priest conducting the rituals among friends and family. But they had no certificate showing their marriage was legal.

Nepal has undergone a transformation since a court decision in 2007 asked the government to make changes in favor of LGBTQ+ people. People who do not identify as female or male are now able to choose “third gender” on their passports and other government documents. The constitution adopted in 2015 also explicitly states there can be no discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation.

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