

Slam Dunk (manga)

Slam Dunk (Japanese: スラムダンク Hepburn: *Suramu Danku*) is a Japanese manga series written and illustrated by Takehiko Inoue about a basketball team from Shōhoku High School in the Shōnan area. It was serialized in *Weekly Shōnen Jump* from 1990 to 1996, with the chapters collected into 31 *tankōbon* volumes by Shueisha. It was adapted into an anime series by Toei Animation which has been broadcast worldwide, enjoying much popularity particularly in Japan, several other Asian countries and Europe.^[3] *Slam Dunk* has sold over 121 million copies in Japan alone, making it one of the best-selling manga series in history. Inoue later used basketball as a central theme in two subsequent manga titles: *Buzzer Beater* and *Real*. In 2010, Inoue received special commendations from the Japan Basketball Association for helping popularize basketball in Japan.

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Plot

Hanamichi Sakuragi is a delinquent and the leader of a gang. Sakuragi is very unpopular with girls, having been rejected an astonishing fifty times. In his first year at Shohoku High School, he meets Haruko Akagi, the girl of his dreams, and is overjoyed when she is not repulsed or scared of him like all the other girls he has asked out.

Haruko, recognizing Sakuragi's athleticism, introduces him to the Shohoku basketball team. Sakuragi is reluctant to join the team at first, as he has no prior experience in sports and thinks that basketball is a game for losers because his fiftieth rejection was in favor of a basketball player. Sakuragi, despite his extreme immaturity and fiery temper, proves to be a natural athlete and joins the team, mainly in the hopes of impressing and getting closer to Haruko. Later on, Sakuragi realizes that he has come to actually love the sport, despite having previously

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<div><div><div><div><div>#1</div><div>桜木君</div></div><div></div><div>スラム ダンク</div><div>SLAM DUNK</div><div>井上雄彦</div></div></div><div>Cover of the first volume of <i>Slam Dunk</i>, featuring Hanamichi Sakuragi.</div></div>	
<div>スラムダンク</div> <div>(<i>Suramu Danku</i>)</div>	
Genre	Coming-of-age, ^[1] sports ^[2]
Manga	
Written by	Takehiko Inoue
Published by	Shueisha
English publisher	<div>AUS Madman Entertainment</div> <div>NA Viz Media Gutsoon! Entertainment (former)</div> <div>SG Chuang Yi</div>
Demographic	<i>Shōnen</i>
Imprint	Jump Comics
Magazine	<i>Weekly Shōnen Jump</i>
English magazine	<div>NA <i>Raijin Comics</i> (former)</div> <div><i>Shonen Jump</i></div>

played primarily because of his crush on Haruko. Kaede Rukawa — Sakuragi's bitter rival (both in basketball and because Haruko has a massive crush, albeit one-sided, on Rukawa), the star rookie and a "girl magnet" — joins the team at the same time. Not long after, Hisashi Mitsui, a skilled three-point shooter and ex-junior high school MVP, and Ryota Miyagi, a short but fast point guard, both rejoin the team and together these four struggle to fulfill team captain Takenori Akagi's dream of winning the national championship. Together, these misfits gain publicity and the once little-known Shohoku basketball team becomes an all-star contender in Japan.

Production

Inoue became inspired to make *Slam Dunk* as he liked basketball since his high school years. After Inoue started *Slam Dunk*, he was surprised when he began receiving letters from readers that said they started playing the sport due to the manga. His editor even told him "basketball was a taboo in this world." Due to these letters, Inoue decided he wanted to draw better basketball games in the series.^[4] With the series, Inoue wanted to demonstrate the feelings from some athletes such as their thoughts when they win, lose or improve at their sport. When he started making *Vagabond*, he noted that when he was doing *Slam Dunk* he had a simpler perspective on life as he focused more in victories and success.^[5]

With the series, Inoue wants the readers to feel achievements as well as love for the sport.^[6] Thinking that his success as a manga artist being largely due to basketball, Inoue organized a *Slam Dunk* Scholarship for Japanese students as he wanted to give back to the sport by increasing its popularity in Japan.^[7] However, when asked about the response from readers to basketball, Inoue commented that although *Slam Dunk* is technically a basketball manga, its story could have been done with other sports such as football.^[8] He also added that the artwork for the manga was very typical and mangalike in comparison to his newer works such as *Real*. His experiences with basketball also influenced the story from *Slam Dunk*: as a youth Inoue started playing basketball to be popular with the girls, but later became interested with the sport in and of itself. This was mirrored in the character of Hanamichi Sakuragi, who starts playing basketball to be popular with the girl he likes, to later become truly fond of the game.^[9]

Media

Manga

Written and illustrated by Takehiko Inoue, the series was originally published in Shueisha's Weekly Shōnen Jump from October 1, 1990 to June 17, 1996.^{[10][11]} The 276 individual chapters were originally collected in 31 *tankōbon* volumes under Shueisha's Jump Comics imprint, with the first being published on February 8, 1991 and the final volume on October 3, 1996.^{[12][13]} It was later reassembled into 24 *kanzenban* volumes under the Jump Comics Deluxe imprint from March 19, 2001 to February 2, 2002.^{[14][15]} A *shinsōban* edition began with the first six volumes all published on June 1, 2018.^[16]

Original run	October 1, 1990 – June 17, 1996
Volumes	31
Anime television series	
Directed by	Nobutaka Nishizawa
Written by	Nobuaki Kishima Yoshiyuki Suga
Music by	Takanobu Masuda (1-61) B.M.F (62-101)
Studio	Toei Animation
Licensed by	NA Toei Animation Inc.
Original network	TV Asahi
English network	AU Network Ten CA Razer (unaired) SEA AXN (original) Animax (reruns)
Original run	October 16, 1993 – March 23, 1996
Episodes	101
Anime film	
Directed by	Nobutaka Nishizawa
Studio	Toei Animation
Released	March 12, 1994
Runtime	30 minutes
Anime film	
<i>Conquer the Nation, Hanamichi Sakuragi!</i>	
Directed by	Toshihiko Arisako
Studio	Toei Animation
Released	July 20, 1994
Runtime	45 minutes
Anime film	
<i>Shohoku's Greatest Challenge!</i>	
Directed by	Hiroyuki Kakudō
Studio	Toei Animation
Released	March 12, 1995
Runtime	40 minutes

In North America, an English version of *Slam Dunk* was published by the now-defunct Gutsoon! Entertainment, which serialized the title in their manga anthology Raijin Comics from 2002 to 2004.^[17] Five collected volumes were published under Gutsoon's *Raijin Graphic Novels* imprint. They were released from July 2, 2003 until May 5, 2004.^{[18][19]} After Gutsoon! went out of business, the license for *Slam Dunk* was purchased by Viz Media, which published a preview of the series in the December 2007 issue of the North American edition of Shonen Jump.^{[20][21][22]} *Slam Dunk* began serialization in the magazine, starting with the May 2008 issue, as well as in *tankōbon* format with the first being published on September 2, 2008.^{[23][24][25]} As of December 3, 2013, Viz has published all 31 volumes of their translated edition.^[26]

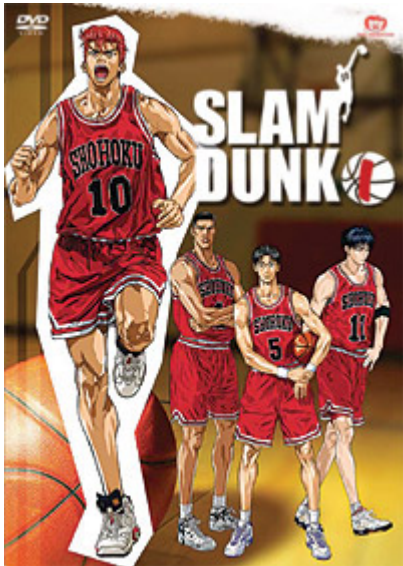
Anime film	
<i>Howling Basketman Spirit!!</i>	
Directed by	Masayuki Akihi
Studio	Toei Animation
Released	July 15, 1995
Runtime	40 minutes

10 Days After

In 2004, Inoue produced an epilogue titled *Slam Dunk: 10 Days After*, which was drawn on 23 chalkboards in the former campus of the defunct Misaki High School located in the Kanagawa Prefecture, and was held for public exhibition for three days between December 3 and 5. The epilogue, along with coverage of the event, was reprinted in the February 2005 issue of *Switch* magazine.^[10]

Anime

An anime series, consisting of 101 episodes, was produced by Toei Animation and directed by Nobutaka Nishizawa.^[27] It was first broadcast on TV Asahi from October 16, 1993 to March 23, 1996. It was later aired on the satellite television network, Animax, in addition to four animated movies produced. The anime followed the manga storyline, but left out the National Tournament games. Toei compiled the episodes into a series of seventeen DVDs which were released in Japan from December 10, 2004 to May 21, 2005.^{[28][29]} Toei once again collected the series in three DVD boxes during 2008. All the three boxes have a total of seventeen discs.^{[30][31][32]}



Cover of the first DVD from *Slam Dunk* published by Geneon and Toei Animation.

Toei and Geneon briefly teamed up to release the anime on DVD in North America after the manga was discontinued, though this was also discontinued after only a few volumes.^{[33][34]} The first DVD was released on March 15, 2005 and volume 4 was the last one released on June 14, 2005 before they were cancelled.^{[35][36]} Various episodes from the series were also downloadable in IGN's Direct2Drive service.^[37] Toei is currently streaming episodes of the series online for a fee and for free through Crunchyroll. Joost also started airing all 101 episodes as of May 2009 on their website.^{[38][39]}

The music was composed by Takanobu Masuda (from episode 1 to 61) and BMF (from episode 62 to 101). Three CD soundtracks were published during the airing of the series in Japan.^{[40][41]} The openings, ending and other two themes were collected into the CD soundtrack *The Best of TV Animation Slam Dunk*, released on July 21, 2003.^[42]

Films

Four films were produced by Toei Animation from 1994 to 1995 while the manga and TV series were still running. They contain largely new material that is either only hinted at or is not presented in the manga. From August 1 to 4, 2006, NHK broadcast all four movies as part of its satellite networks NHK BS-2's *Summer Anime Choice* line-up, and TV Osaka aired the last three movies from January 3 to 8, 2007.^[43] All the films were collected into a DVD box named *Slam Dunk The Movie* which was released on December 10, 2004.^[44]

The first film, simply titled *Slam Dunk*, premiered on March 12, 1994.^[45] Set after Shohoku's practice game against Ryonan, the film focuses on a practice game against Takezono High. Before the game, Sakuragi runs into Yoko Shimura, the girl who rejects him in the very first scene of the series, and Oda, the basketball player she rejected him for. *Zenkoku Seiha da! Sakuragi Hanamichi*,^[a] released on July 9, 1994,^[46] is the second film from the series. It happens during Shohoku's 4th Round Qualifying game against Tsukubu High. The film features original characters including Godai, an old friend of Akagi and Kogure's, Rango, a wild show-off who is in love with Haruko and quarrels with Sakuragi, and Coach Kawasaki, a former pupil of Anzai-sensei. *Shohoku Saidai no Kiki! Moero Sakuragi Hanamichi*^[b] was released on March 4, 1995.^[47] Set after Shohoku's loss to Kainan, and during a practice match against Ryokufu High. *Hoero Basukettoman Tamashii!! Hanamichi to Rukawa no Atsuki Natsu*,^[c] which was released one June 15, 1995,^[48] tells that Rukawa's middle school kouhai Ichiro Mizusawa will be paralyzed soon and wishes to have one last game against Rukawa.^[43]

Video games

Numerous video games based on the series, mostly developed by Banpresto and produced by Bandai, have been published for the Japanese market. Two basketball sims titled *Slam Dunk Gakeppuchi no Kesshō League*^[d] and *Slam Dunk 2* were released for the Game Boy.^{[49][50]} The Super Famicom had three games, *Slam Dunk: Shikyou Gekitotsu*,^[e] *Slam Dunk 2: IH Yosen Kanzenban!!*,^[f] and *SD Heat Up!!*.^{[51][52][53]} *Slam Dunk* games have also been released for the Game Gear, Mega Drive, and Sega Saturn.^{[54][55][56]} A *Slam Dunk* coin-operated arcade game by Banpresto was released in 1995. Characters of the series also appear in the Nintendo DS games *Jump Super Stars* and *Jump Ultimate Stars*.^{[57][58]}

Unofficial game modifications have been made by fans for NBA 2K13 (PC Version).^[59]

Reception

The collected volumes of *Slam Dunk* sold over 100 million copies by 2004,^[60] and over 118 million by 2012.^[61] The title had more than 121 million copies sold by 2014 and is Shueisha's fifth best-selling manga series.^[62] In 1994, it received the 40th Shogakukan Manga Award for *shōnen manga*.^[63] Until it was broken in 2002, volumes 21 through 23 of *Slam Dunk* held the record for initial printing of a manga at 2.5 million copies.^[64] The imprint version of *Slam Dunk: 10 Days After* was popular, having initially ranked 6th and then 15th in Oricon's weekly ranking of manga.^{[65][66]} The first six volumes of the *shinsōban* edition of the original manga all reached the top eight of their release week, with the highest being the first volume at number two.^[67] The English translation of the series was listed as one of the best comics of 2008 by *Publishers Weekly*.^[68] Similarly, the Young Adult Library Services Association named the first volume one of its "Great Graphic Novels for Teens" in early 2009.^[69]

The success of *Slam Dunk* is cited as an influence in the increased popularity of basketball among the Japanese youth during the 1990s.^[70] The *Slam Dunk* Scholarship program was created in 2006 by Inoue and Shueisha. The winning 17- to 18-year-old recipient receives a fully paid academic and athletic scholarship to a university-preparatory school in America if they pass the school's admission interview.^[71] In 2010, Inoue received special commendations from the Japan Basketball Association for helping popularize basketball in Japan and the scholarship program.^[72] In a poll of close to 79,000 Japanese fans for the 10th Japan Media Arts Festival in 2006, *Slam Dunk* was voted the #1 manga of all time.^[73] In the Japanese government's 2009 Media Arts 100 Poll of the public's favorite works of art of all time, *Slam Dunk* took first place in the manga division.^[74] In a survey from Oricon in 2009, it was ranked first as the manga that fans wanted to be turned into a live-action film.^[75]

The anime adaptation has also been very popular in Japan. In TV Asahi's 2005 Top 100 Anime survey of multiple age groups, *Slam Dunk* ranked as the 8th most popular anime.^[76] In another poll from TV Asahi but developed by a website, the series ranked 10th.^[77] The home video release of the anime also had good sales, having appeared on Oricon's Japanese Animation DVD and Blu-ray rankings.^{[78][79][80]}

See also

- J. R. Sakuragi — Japanese-American basketball player, born J. R. Henderson, choosed Sakuragi name after his naturalization^[81]

Notes

- a. 全国制覇だ! 桜木花道, lit. "Conquer the Nation, Hanamichi Sakuragi!"
- b. 湘北最大の危機! 燃えろ桜木花道, lit. "Shohoku's Greatest Challenge! Burning Hanamichi Sakuragi"
- c. 吠えろバスケットマン魂!! 花道と流川の熱き夏, lit. "Howling Basketman Spirit!! Hanamichi and Rukawa's Hot Summer"
- d. スラムダンクがけっぶちの決勝リーグ *Gakeppuchi no Kesshō Rīgu*
- e. スラムダンク 四強激突!! *Suramu Danku*
- f. スラムダンク2 IH予選完全版!! *Suramu Danku: : IH Yosen Kanzenban!! Shi Tsuyo Gekitotsu*

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- *Slam Dunk* (<http://www.toei-anim.com/slamdunk.html>) at Toei Animation
- *Slam Dunk* (<https://www.animenewsnetwork.com/encyclopedia/manga.php?id=1596>) (manga) at Anime News Network's encyclopedia
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