

# 'Demon Slayer' Dominates Japan's Top Box-office Rankings

AFP:: The latest iteration of anime blockbuster "Demon Slayer" has become Japan's second highest-grossing film ever, data showed Tuesday, meaning the mega-franchise now dominates the top two spots in the country's all-time box office rankings.

"Demon Slayer" – the tale of adolescent swordsman Tanjiro Kamado and his comrades on a quest to kill human-devouring demons – is wildly popular both at home and abroad for its breathtaking animation and relatable themes such as friendship and family bonds.

Within 60 days of its release, the movie hauled in 33 billion yen (\$224 million) in ticket sales domestically, distributors said Tuesday.

This means it has now overtaken Studio Ghibli's 2001 masterpiece "Spirited Away" – which grossed 31.6 billion yen – as the second biggest box-office hit, according to movie sales tracker Kogyo Tsushinsha.

The feat came after the 155-minute film took first place in the North American box office this weekend with a genre-record \$70 million debut.

"We hope that the 'Demon Slayer' fandom will expand more," distributor Aniplex said.

With the latest milestone, the series now has only itself to outrank, after its first film in 2020 bagged a whopping 40.7 billion yen.

The latest movie – the first of a series-capping trilogy – is

hyped everywhere in Japan from giant train station adverts to endless TV commercials and even rice paddy art starring Tanjiro.

“I cry each time,” Yuri Kamada, 22, told AFP at Grand Cinema Sunshine in Tokyo’s anime hub Ikebukuro, after her third viewing of the film.

Not only humans but their enemies are depicted so thoughtfully that “I can easily sympathise with demons too”, she said, describing “nothing but pride” in the movie as a Japanese citizen.

Originally penned by comic book artist Koyoharu Gotouge and then animated by studio Ufotable, “Demon Slayer” is often lauded for setting a new standard for anime cinematography.

Dazzling visual effects permeate the latest movie featuring acrobatic, lightning-fast battles with demons at a kaleidoscopic castle with an infinite array of floors.

Demon Slayer’s relative accessibility also sets it apart from other manga juggernauts like “One Piece”, which spans over 100 volumes.

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“Unlike ‘One Piece’ or ‘Dragon Ball’, it’s a rather short series of around 20 volumes, and I appreciate its simple, easy-to-understand plot,” Reo Takagi, a 19-year-old Tokyo student, said after his second viewing.

Anime dominates in Japan, where only two of the 10 highest-grossing films are live-action – namely “Titanic” and the first of the “Harry Potter” series.

Partly buoyed by the indoor entertainment boom during the Covid-19 pandemic, anime’s popularity has exploded globally in recent years, with streaming giants like Netflix rushing to capitalise.

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