On Wednesday, May 21st 2014, the largest Japan Day ever took place at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Japan Day is a cultural and academic event, held at the Hebrew University for many years now. This event was produced by volunteers - students from the Asia Studies Department and "Nippon", the students' cell for Japanese culture - with the aid of the department's academic senior staff. Additional support was given by the Japanese embassy in Israel and by the Freiberg Center for Eastern Asia Studies.

The academic and cultural contents throughout the day were a winning combination, engaging hundreds of people in different activities, half of whom were non-student visitors who came to the university especially for this event. This year saw the first collaboration with AMAI, the Israeli Manga and Anime Organization, which helped us broaden our reach to a more varied audience and answer its demands. Japan Day's schedule started with an academic conference focusing on the globalization of the Japanese Anime industry, with the participation of researchers and animators from Japan and Israel.

The rest of the morning held open-forum lectures, given by special guest lecturers: Prof. Ben-Ami Shiloni, Dr. Helena Grinshpun and Ms. Anat Cooper. Their lectures attracted many people – students and non-students alike. Throughout the day, guests were offered Sushi, Ikebana, Kendo and Karate work-shops. Registration for the work-shops took place prior to Japan Day and classes were completely booked.

In addition, the venue offered a wide variety of stands and activities that gave the event the distinct air of Matsuri (Japanese festival): traditional Japanese attire try-on stand, Manga-Café, Japanese food and tea stands, Japanese festival games, fun quizzes, dance and Japanese contests.

The event was concluded at the Rabin Hall (filled to capacity) with a prize bearing Cosplay (animation costumes) competition and a screening of two episodes of the Anime series Shingeki no Kyoujin (Attack on Titan). This was chaired by two special guests from Japan: the series' producer, Mr. Wada George, and the series' director, Mr. Makihara Ryotaro (also director of the movie HAL) and was followed by a Q&A session with questions from the audience.

Japan Day 2014 was declared an outstanding success, promoting and encouraging team-building within the department and hopefully bringing the visitors closer to the Japanese culture and to the East Asia studies. We are sure the event will be remembered with a smile and hope to see everyone again in Japan Day 2015.