

Friends of Japan



Lorena Sue Rojas Espinoza

Born in Peru, resident in Nagoya. Spent a total of six years living in Japan with her family during elementary and high school. Returned to Japan after graduating from the Universidad de Santiago de Chile. Currently works as an interpreter and translator.

Promoting Cross-Cultural Understanding as a Language Professional

Born in Peru, Lorena Sue Rojas Espinoza currently works in Japan as a Spanish interpreter and translator. As a child, she and her family went back and forth between Peru and Japan several times in connection with her father's job. When she was attending high school in Japan, a friend asked her if she could translate a questionnaire about renovating a housing development into Spanish in order to collect as many opinions as possible from the development's foreign-born residents. This was her first experience serving as a translator. Later, she participated in the public meeting for the project as an interpreter and found great satisfaction in helping South Americans and Japanese understand each other despite their different customs and ways of thinking.

Deciding to pursue a career in translation and interpreting, Rojas went to the Universidad de Santiago de Chile (University of Santiago, Chile), which offers a course in the field. There she studied translation and interpreting from scratch across four languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese, and Japanese.

During her time at the university, she realized that there were many people in Peru and Chile with an interest in Japan. "Even the owner of a small local bakery might attend Japanese classes," she says. "Manga, martial arts, history, literature—everyone had different reasons, but they all wanted to know more about Japan. And I believe that learning about other cultures leads to personal growth. This made me wish there were more opportunities for cultural exchange outside of events held at universities and language schools."

After graduation, Rojas decided without hesitation to return to Japan, where she launched her own interpretation and translation company, taking on a range of cultural exchange-related and other projects. "When I came back to Japan after five years in Chile, there was more English signage, there were interpreters permanently available at government offices and medical facilities, and even multilingual pamphlets were common. Foreigners living in Japan have access to more forms of assistance than ever before, and I want to be a part of that."

Rojas intends to continue to base her life in Japan. "Living here for three years in elementary school and another three in high school, I came to like Japan very much. This is where I feel most at peace. In fact, my great-grandfather immigrated from Japan. The first group of immigrants from Japan arrived in South America in 1899, and that's exactly around the time my great-grandfather was alive. I would like to translate books and other materials about that time into Spanish to help uncover the history of that exchange and deepen the relationship between those two parts of the world." Language is the foundation of this kind of exchange, and as a language professional, Rojas will continue striving to remove verbal barriers and encourage mutual understanding.