

In 1995 the 6th International Assembly of the **Knights of Rizal** took place in Wilhelmsfeld and in 1998 a big celebration was held in Heidelberg and Wilhelmsfeld to commemorate the 100-year independence of the Philippines from Spanish colonial rule ("Kalayaan").

Close and friendly relations between Filipinos and Germans have developed in the last 60 years and in 1997 the Wilhelmsfeld-Heidelberg chapter of the **"Knights of Rizal"** was founded, which cultivates and keeps alive the memory of Rizal's message.

In 2003, the Rizal Park was significantly upgraded with the installation of busts of four of Rizal's contemporaries and patrons: Prof. Otto Becker, Prof. Rudolf Virchow, Berlin, Prof. Ferdinand Blumentritt, Leitmeritz and Rev. Karl Ullmer, Wilhelmsfeld .

In 2006 the Chapter of the „Kababaihang Rizalista / **Ladies for Rizal**“ were founded in Wilhelmsfeld.

The marble plaque from 1960, which was destroyed in a storm in 1990, could be restored thanks to donations of the members of the two chapters and ceremoniously unveiled in June 2010 on the occasion of the 50-year relationship between Wilhelmsfeld and the Philippines.

On October 7th, 2011, the town twinning between the town of Rizal, Calamba, and Wilhelmsfeld, which was decided in 2009, was sealed in a ceremony in the presence of prominent guests in the town hall of Wilhelmsfeld.

In 2014, a section of the Neckar banks in Heidelberg was given the name **"Rizal-Ufer"**, where a sandstone boulder with an inscription reminds of Rizal's poem "A las Flores de Heidelberg / To The Flowers Of Heidelberg".

In June 2016, after a redesign, the Rizal Park was inaugurated again with a celebration.



Every year, on the anniversary of Rizal's birth and death (**June 19th** and **December 30th**), public commemorations of the **Knights of Rizal** take place with the community of Wilhelmsfeld in Rizal Park.

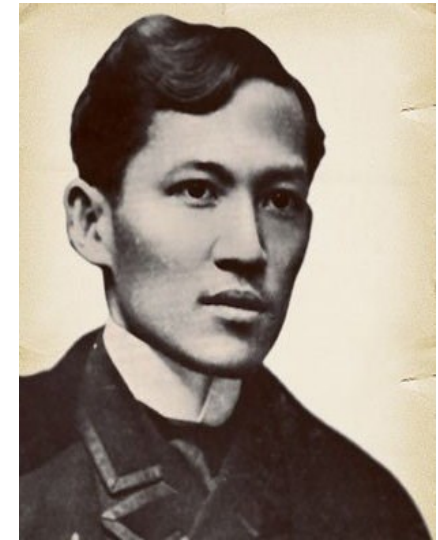
We wish all visitors, the friends of the Philippines and Dr. José Rizals in our region an interesting and pleasant stay!

Visit the **Knights of Rizal** Wilhelmsfeld-Heidelberg Chapter website for more information

www.kor-wilhelmsfeld-hd.de

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Dr. José Rizal

Dr. José Rizal (1861-1896), martyr and national hero of the Philippines, doctor and gifted poet, spent a short, but very important part of his life in Heidelberg and Wilhelmsfeld, Germany.

He came from Paris in February 1886 and completed his studies in ophthalmology with the renowned Prof. Otto Becker at the University Eye Clinic in Heidelberg, Bergheimer Str. 20 (5), where new diagnostic and therapeutic methods were used at the time. Through this study, Rizal was later able to cure his mother's eye disease.

He lived in various accommodations in Heidelberg, first at Karl-Str. 16 (1), then at Universitätsplatz in Grabengasse 12 (2) and finally at Obere Neckarstr.11 (4).

Here in Heidelberg he encountered classical education, scientific progress and the growing national self-confidence in Germany and he saw and admired the beauty of Heidelberg and its surroundings. This inspired him to write his famous poem **"A las Flores de Heidelberg / To The Flowers Of Heidelberg"**, in which it becomes apparent that, although the beauty of Heidelberg impressed him very

much, his thoughts and heart were still in the Philippines. On the “*Philosophenweg*” (3), from which one has the famous romantic view of Heidelberg, the Neckar and the castle, he met Pastor Karl Ullmer, a Protestant pastor in the small Odenwald village of Wilhelmsfeld. Rev. Ullmer invited Rizal to live with his family in Wilhelmsfeld for three months, and Rizal readily agreed because staying there was cheaper, gave him the opportunity to speak German, and allowed him the quiet, simple country life in contrast to the busy student life in Heidelberg.

So he left Heidelberg in April 1886 and moved to Wilhelmsfeld, although this meant a long, almost daily trek through the forests and mountains of the *Odenwald*, to continue his studies at the eye clinic, where he also attended the university's 500th anniversary celebrations in Heidelberg and gained impressions of a student life in Heidelberg.

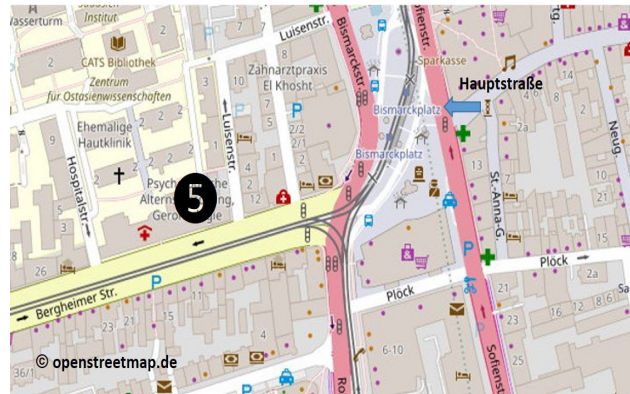
In Wilhelmsfeld, Rizal encountered the warm hospitality of Rev. Ullmer's family and made rapid progress in speaking and writing German. He spoke to evangelical and catholic clergy, thereby experiencing religious tolerance and encountering the simple people from the country.

In addition to his studies, he also found the time to (in his words) “moderate” and complete some statements of his famous, strongly autobiographical novel “*Noli Me Tangere*”, and finally he celebrated his 25th birthday in Wilhelmsfeld in 1886.

Thus Rizal lovingly describes the romantic landscape and people of Wilhelmsfeld clearly in a passage in Chapter VII of “*Noli Me Tangere*” in which his main character *Ibarra* speaks of his time in Europe.

Rizal left Wilhelmsfeld and Heidelberg in the summer of 1886 and came to **Berlin** via Leipzig, where his now famous novel “*Noli Me Tangere*” was printed and published.

Eventually he returned to the Philippines. Despite the ban, his novel caused a stir there, also because he tried to pass on some of the thoughts and influences he had experienced in Germany to his compatriots.



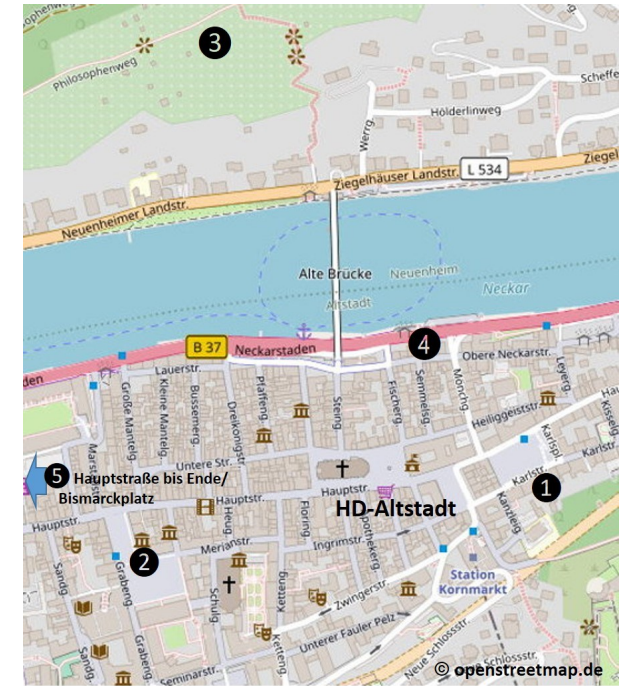
This is one of the reasons why he later was nicknamed “Dr. Ullman”, the “German Doctor”.

His experiences in Germany led him to place great emphasis on education, hard work, democratic and civil rights and patriotism, through which he wanted to win freedom for his country and his compatriots.

But the Spanish colonial authorities wanted to silence this uncomfortable admonisher and critic; and so he was accused of “riot and high treason” and finally executed by rifle fires after an unfair trial on December 30, 1896 in Manila.

In 1960, as Rizal's 100th birthday approached, Mrs. Dr. Paz P. Mendez (wife of the then Philippine ambassador in Paris and later Foreign Minister Mauro Mendez) with the support of the then Protestant pastor Gottlob Weber in Wilhelmsfeld traces Rizal and unveiled commemorative plaques at the Protestant vicarage in Wilhelmsfeld (B) and at the places where Rizal in Heidelberg lived and studied. With great efforts, Rev. Weber finally managed to locate Rev. Ullmer's descendants in Germany.

In 1960, the Hack-Ullmer family donated to the Filipino people their extensive and priceless collection of original Rizal memorabilia (letters, drawings, a first edition of *Noli Me Tangere*, etc.). These pieces are now kept in the “Ullmer Collection” in the *National Library of the Philippines*.



The street that runs past the rectory in Wilhelmsfeld was renamed *José-Rizal-Strasse* (C) in 1964 and the sandstone fountain in the rectory garden, from which Rizal drank, was carried to Luneta in 1964 as a gift to the Filipino people and since then is part of Manila's Luneta-Park.

In 1978, the Rizal Park in Wilhelmsfeld (A) was inaugurated with a larger-than-life bronze statue of José Rizal, created by Prof. Caedo (Manila). The stone slabs in the fountain basin are intended to symbolize the island world of the Philippines.

In order to get to know the places where Dr. José Rizal lived and worked in 1886, since 1960 thousands of Rizalists and visitors from all over the world have come to Heidelberg and Wilhelmsfeld, where Pastor Weber, an enthusiastic Rizalist for almost 25 years, has served as a knowledgeable guide, host and promoter of Rizal's thoughts.