

## Report on “Soka University Collection - Treasures of Goethe Exhibition”: First Editions and His Handwritten Letters

Ito Takao

1. Overview
2. Exhibition Contents
  - 1) Panels
    - I Introduction
    - II About the Exhibits
    - III Goethe: His Life and Times
    - IV Adapted from Special Lecture “Goethe the Man”
  - 2) Exhibit Captions
    - I First edition of Goethe's books
      - The Sorrows of Young Werther*, 1775
      - Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, 4 volumes, 1795-1796
      - The Complete Works of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe*, 61 volumes, 1827-1830, 1832-1842
    - II Goethe's handwritten letters, 9 letters, 17 pages
      - (1) Dated 15 August 1819 (Addressed to his son August)
      - (2) Dated 23 August 1819 (Addressed to his son August)
      - (3) Dated 13 August 1820 (Addressed to his son August)
      - (4) Dated 7 September 1820 (Addressed to his son August)
      - (5) Dated 9 October 1821 (Addressed to his son August)
      - (6) Dated 21 October 1821 (Addressed to his son August)
      - (7) Dated 13 August 1822 (Addressed to his son August)
      - (8) Dated 27 December 1822 (Addressed to philologist Joseph Stanislaus Zauper)
      - (9) Dated 24 August 1823 (Addressed to his son August)
3. Records of the Opening Ceremony
  - 1) Greetings by Soka University President Masashi Suzuki
  - 2) Greetings by First Secretary Dr. Soehnke Grothusen, Director of Culture Department from

---

Ito Takao (Professor, Faculty of Letters, Soka University)

the German Embassy

- 3) Congratulatory Message from Dr. Yoshihito Mori, the former President of Goethe-Gesellschaft in Japan
- 4) Greetings by Soka University Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Yasunori Tashiro
- 5) Explanation of exhibits by Soka University Executive Vice President Ryohei Tanaka

## 1. Overview

From December 1 to December 22, 2023, the Soka University Collection – Treasures of Goethe Exhibition was held at Global Square 1<sup>st</sup> floor Entrance Hall, displaying several valuable artifacts related to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), the German literary giant, who is known for his famous work *The Sorrows of Young Werther*.

The exhibition commemorates the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of founder Daisaku Ikeda’s first special lecture held on March 10, 2003. He delivered the lecture to the students under the title “Goethe the Man,” which lasted for 90 minutes. The first edition of Goethe’s works and nine handwritten letters collected by the university were displayed.

In particular, the nine letters were mostly addressed to August, Goethe’s only son who survived into adulthood, and are historically valuable, including writings related to *West-Eastern Divan* and “Marienbad Elegy” ; masterpieces written in his later years. This is the largest collection of handwritten letters in Japan, seven of which were on display in Japan for the first time. (to preserve the artifacts, replicas were displayed)



This exhibition was created by Ikeda Research Institute for Soka Education (IRISE), and supervised by Executive Vice President Professor Ryohei Tanaka and the author. The English translation was provided by IRISE Professor Andrew Gebert and staff Toh Jian Qun. The panels and exhibits were designed by Hokuto Engineering Co., Ltd.

At the opening ceremony held on December 1, 2023, Soka University President Suzuki delivered his opening remarks, followed by greetings from First Secretary Dr. Soehnke Grothusen, the Director of Culture Department from the German Embassy, and Professor Takao Ito introduced the congratulatory speech by the former President of Goethe-Gesellschaft in Japan, Dr. Yoshihito Mori.

Soka University Chairman Mr. Yasunori Tashiro reflected on Mr. Ikeda's special lecture, "Goethe the Man," calling for a renewed determination to "succeed and continue to pursue the grand goal of the Founder, and to realize world peace and the happiness of the people."

After the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Faculty of Education Associate Professor Hiromi Adachi and a student from the Faculty of Letters performed the song "Heidenröslein" (Heath Rose). The song is a poem by Goethe, composed by Schubert and Werner. A digest video of Mr. Ikeda's lecture titled "Goethe the Man" was screened, followed by an explanation of the exhibits by Executive Vice President Ryohei Tanaka.



The exhibition and the opening ceremony were also reported on several newspapers, including the Yomiuri Shimbun (Tama edition, morning newspaper), Mainichi Shimbun (Tama edition, morning newspaper), and Seikyo Shimbun on December 2.

The following is a record of the exhibition (panels and captions) and speeches by each speaker during the opening ceremony.

## 2 Exhibition contents

### (1) Panels

#### I. Introduction

*When head and heart are busy, say,  
What better can be found?  
Who neither loves nor goes astray,  
Were better under ground.*

(Goethe's Works, vol. 1 (Poems), G. Barrie)

Goethe, who was close to the people, affirmed that as long as we are alive, it is natural to love, to feel lost, or conflicted. The founder wrote this passage in his reading notes when he was turning 20.

Goethe was a versatile poet, playwright, politician, and scientist. Although he lost family members one after another, he looked deeply at life and death and sublimated his anguish into his art.

The founder, who had lost his brother in the war and suffered from tuberculosis himself, deeply empathized with the words of Goethe.

He also quoted Goethe in his speeches, including in his dialogues with many scholars from overseas, and in his encouragement to the youth.

He provided a vision for the future of humanity through Goethe's worldview.

In March 2003, at the request of students, faculty staff, and the board of directors, the founder delivered a 90-minute special lecture titled “Goethe the Man.”

Even though it was a lecture, it was not theoretical.

The founder spoke in a straightforward manner under the theme of “a human being who lived a turbulent life.”

*The commoner, the servant,  
the conquerer  
at all times confess:  
the highest happiness  
for a child of the earth*

*is found only in character.*

(West-Eastern Divan)

“The purpose of life is to create the greatest happiness which is of character.

For that, I hope that you will continue learning.”

This was the founder’s warm encouragement to each student before their graduation.

To commemorate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of this special lecture,

From the university’s collection, first editions of Goethe’s books and his handwritten letters will be displayed.

We hope you will be inspired by the breath of creativity of this great literary figure and use this inspiration to find vigor for tomorrow.

Soka University

## II. About the exhibits

This exhibition will display valuable Goethe-related artifacts from the university’s collection.

*The Sorrows of Young Werther,*

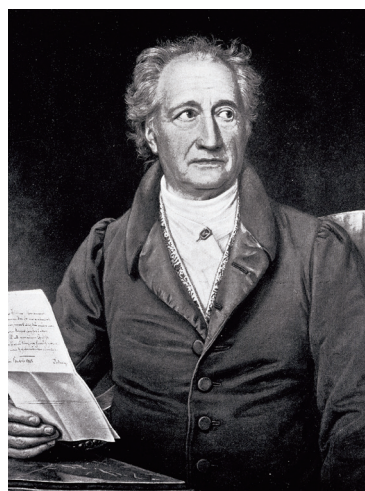
1775, first edition, second printing

*Wilhelm Meister’s Apprenticeship,*

4 volumes, 1795-1796, first printing

*The Complete Works of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe,*

61 volumes, 1827-1830, 1832-1842, first edition (pocket edition)



All of these books were published during Goethe’s lifetime. (20 books from the latter half of *The Complete Works of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe* were published posthumously)

*Handwritten letters by Goethe, nine letters, 17 pages,*

1819-1823 (replicas, released to the public for the first time in Japan)

The nine letters were mostly addressed to August, Goethe’s only son who survived into adulthood, and are historically valuable, including writings related to *West-Eastern Divan* and “Marienbad Elegy” ; masterpieces written in his later years. It is known that there are six other handwritten letters of Goethe in Japan, including those at the University of Tokyo, Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, and Tenri University.<sup>1</sup>

Since 2015, various research institutes, mainly in Germany, have been building a database of the entire collection of Goethe’s handwritten letters in approximately 200 locations worldwide. The Goethe and Schiller Archive in Germany is currently compiling and publishing “The Complete Works of Goethe” in 38 volumes.<sup>2</sup>

The recipients of Goethe’s letters included not only those in literature and the arts, but also important figures of the time in various fields such as philosophy, science, and politics. Thus, Goethe’s correspondence is a first-class research source for understanding European history in the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> centuries.

### III. Goethe: His Life and Times

#### Debut from *The Sorrows of Young Werther* 1749-1775

Born in August 1749 to a merchant family in Frankfurt, Germany. He became familiar with theater and storytelling under the influence of his father, who was a devoted educator, and his mother, who often told stories to him.

After a period of illness, he studied law at the University of Strasbourg. During this time, he met the literary critic Herder and had a love affair with the young Friederike. These experiences led to the publishing of the poems “Heidenröslein” (Rose on the Heath or Little Rose of the Field) and “May Song,” and his career as a poet began.

During training as a lawyer in Wetzlar, he met Charlotte, the woman who would become the model for the heroine in the novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, and later fell in love with her. The novel, in which he freely expressed his passionate emotions and his unhappiness toward society, caused a frenzied response throughout Europe.



Frankfurt, Birthplace of Goethe

---

<sup>1</sup> Reference: Ishihara, A. (2023) Goethe’s Letters in Japan, *European Studies* (Vol. 22, p. 105-112) University of Tokyo.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., p. 106.

### Political Career in Weimar 1775 - 1788

Later, at the invitation of Duke Karl August, Goethe became involved in the politics of Weimar. He established schools for spinning and knitting textiles for the livelihood of the common people, set up irrigation facilities, eased the tax burden, and reduced the number of army troops. At the same time, he began to study nature and expanded his interests to zoology, anatomy, and meteorology. He discovered the intermaxillary bone in the human body and made other achievements in the field of medicine.

However, his aspirations to enrich the public finances and contribute to the welfare of the common people were met with resistance from vested interests, and he was faced with several setbacks. As the number of incomplete poetic works increased, he left for Italy alone, in search of a new beginning as a poet and human being.

During his stay in Italy, he rediscovered his creativity and was able to complete his play "Egmont." He then proceeded to write "Faust," which became his life's work and fulfilled his wish to be known as a poet.

### Friendship with Schiller, a German Literary Giant 1788 - 1805

After returning to Weimar, Goethe met Christiane, who later became his wife, and their son August was born. Their loving life was short-lived when the French Revolution broke out, and he served under Duke August. He left a legacy of societal reactions to the Revolution in his works.

In 1794, he began his friendship with Friedrich Schiller (1759-1805), a poet known as the author of "Ode to Joy," which lasted about eleven years until Schiller's death from illness at age 46. Following Schiller's advice, he completed his long novel *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* and his epic poem "Hermann and Dorothea."

Their friendship ushered in the golden age of German literature. Their correspondence numbered more than 1,000 letters, and Japanese translations have also been published.



Statues of Goethe and Schiller

### Advocacy of World Literature – Goethe's Later Years 1805 - 1832

After Schiller's death, Goethe grieved that he had "lost half of my being," but the following year, he fulfilled a long-cherished wish of his late friend by completing "Faust, Part One" which he had written with Schiller's encouragement.

Despite a succession of wars, he devoted himself to study and art, and completed

"Theory of Colors," which was a breakthrough in the methodology of modern natural science. In addition, he left behind works that trace his spiritual development, such as "Poetry and Truth," an autobiographical work, and "Campagne in Frankreich," an account of his military service.



Goethe's house in Weimar

He also became familiar with not only the latest European literature, but also Indian and Chinese literature through translated works and advocated for a "world literature" that transcends narrow-minded nationalism. Although faced with the grief of the deaths of his wife and son, he fought for his life and completed *Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years* and "Faust, Part Two."

In 1832, he caught a cold and passed away sitting in his chair at the age of 82. His last words are said to have been "More light."

#### IV. Adapted from Founder's Special Lecture "Goethe the Man"

##### Read by the founder in his youth

Before I begin my lecture, I would like to share some words of Goethe that I have been fond of since my youth: "Use your time honestly! If you wish to understand something, do not seek it far afield!"

This has become one of my mottoes over the years.

Goethe described youth as "so rich in hidden powers." No one is greater, no one is stronger than the person who is dynamic and vigorous in youth. Goethe's own life admirably attests to this.

In my youth, I resolved to dedicate my life to my chosen path, with the full conviction that this period of youth was the time to cultivate the strength I would need to meet the challenges ahead.<sup>3</sup>

##### The importance of one's determination

During his student days, Goethe quietly decided to undertake his own education and cultivate his powers as a writer. He was driven by the desire to touch people's hearts, have an impact on the world and build a new age through his writings.

The great human revolution of each individual starts with just this kind of decision to challenge one's dreams.

---

<sup>3</sup> Ikeda, D. (2006). Goethe the Man. To the Youthful Pioneers of Soka (p.117). Soka University Student Union.



To achieve this goal, Goethe spent his time as a student greedily imbibing a vast range of learning – literature, art, science, languages and history among others.

A person who decides to change the world, to move people's hearts, for the sake of human happiness and lasting peace, is strong. I hope you will each strive to be just such a person.<sup>4</sup>

#### Building one's foundation

Goethe laid his foundations as a poet and writer while still a student, when he was about 20 years old. This is an important time in life. It sets the course for many things in the future. I can verify this from my own experience.

Please don't forget that one of the purposes of your time as students and of your youth is to lay the foundation for the rest of your lives.

Many years later, the 75-year-old Goethe famously said to a young man who came to him seeking advice about his future: "The great point is to make a capital that will not be exhausted." With this encouragement, he set the young man on the right path.

I hope that you will deeply ponder these words.

Young people need to focus earnestly on their goals, and to solidly establish an unshakable foundation in order to be able to accomplish them. This, too, is another of Goethe's insights about life.<sup>5</sup>

#### Goethe's final words

It is often said that Goethe's last words were "More light!" Actually, he seems to have asked that the shutters be opened to allow more light into his room.

My mentor Josei Toda gave his own interpretation to Goethe's words. "I think in Goethe's last words," he said, "we can hear a cry from the depths of Goethe's being. By asking for more light, he was expressing his unceasing wish to keep observing the world, keep learning from it, keep engaging it in dialogue, and further, to continue dedicating his life and taking action for the world's sake."<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 122-123

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 127-128

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., p. 138

## (2) Exhibit captions

### I. First editions of Goethe's books

#### *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, first edition, second printing

Leipzig, Weygand'sche Buchhandlung, 1775, 2v.in1

This mid-length novel was written by Goethe when he was 25. The novel narrates the story of a young man, Werther, who falls in love with a woman named Charlotte, who already has a fiancé, until his suicide in despair of his unrequited love. The story unfolds consequentially through a series of letters written by the protagonist.

At the time of publication, the book was the bestseller in Europe and some people even took their own lives, influenced by the example of the protagonist. It is said that Napoleon read the book seven times.

This work is based on Goethe's personal experience. Goethe stated that he overcame his crisis by freely expressing the protagonist's intense feelings, conflicts, and his heartbreak in the form of a novel. It is still widely read around the world and has been adapted into a manga in Japan, where it remains a well-loved novel of youth.



#### *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*, first edition

Berlin, J. F. Unger, 1795-1796, 4v

This full-length novel was written by Goethe at the age of 47. It narrates the story of a young man, Wilhelm, who through joining a traveling theatre troupe and interacting with many people, grew as a person through his love, friendship, and mentor-disciple relationships. A sequel, *Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years* (1829), was written later.

While most novels up to that time had focused on a single incident or event, Goethe's novel depicted the development of a person in a full-length novel, creating a new genre, the Bildungsroman.



This form, which is both biographical and ensemble drama in style, was taken up later by writers, such as Romain Rolland, Thomas Mann, and Hermann Hesse. It is also said to be the model for the great novels of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

***The Complete Works of Goethe, 61 Volumes*, first edition (pocket edition)**

Stuttgart and Tübingen: J. G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1827-1830, 1832-1842

The definitive edition of the complete works of Goethe in his lifetime, supervised by Goethe himself. The latter 20 books are supplements and were edited by Eckermann and Riemer after Goethe's death, from 1832 to 1842.

Contents

Vols. 1-4: Poems

Vols. 5-6 West-Eastern Divan

Vols. 7-15 Plays (Egmont, Faust Part 1, etc.)

Vol. 16 The Sorrows of Young Werther

Vol. 17 Elective Affinities

Vols. 18-20 Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship

Vols. 21-23 Wilhelm Meister's Journeyman Years

Vols. 24-26 From my Life: Truth and Poetry

Vols. 27-29 Italian Journey

Vol. 30: Campaign in France

Vols. 31-32 Chronicles

Vol. 33 Book reviews

Vols. 34-40 Essays on Art etc.

Vols. 41-60 Supplements (Faust, Part 2, etc., published posthumously)



**II. Goethe's handwritten letters, 9 letters, 17 pages**

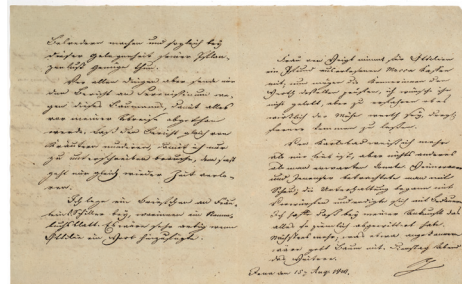
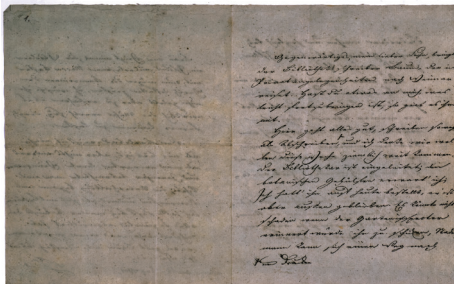
Of the nine letters, one was addressed to philologist Joseph Stanislaus Zauper and the remaining 8 letters were addressed to his son August. Goethe had five children, but only August survived into adulthood. All the letters were signed with 'G' and are historically valuable, including content related to his masterpieces written in his later years, *West-Eastern Divan* and "Marienbad Elegy."

(1) Dated 15 August 1819 (Addressed to his son August)

- (2) Dated 23 August 1819 (Addressed to his son August)
- (3) Dated 13 August 1820 (Addressed to his son August)
- (4) Dated 7 September 1820 (Addressed to his son August)
- (5) Dated 9 October 1821 (Addressed to his son August)
- (6) Dated 21 October 1821 (Addressed to his son August)
- (7) Dated 13 August 1822 (Addressed to his son August)
- (8) Dated 27 December 1822 (Addressed to philologist Joseph Stanislaus Zauper)
- (9) Dated 24 August 1823 (Addressed to his son August)

**Letter No. 1 (Addressed to his son August) [Released to the public for the first time]**

**Jena, 15 August 1819**



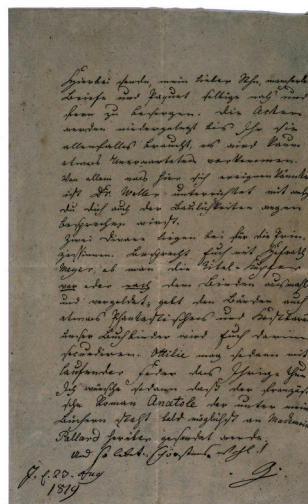
On August 26, Goethe, who almost turned 70, left for the spa town of Carlsbad (now Karlovy Vary in the Czech Republic) for treatment. This letter was written eleven days earlier. In the letter, Goethe mentioned the conference held in Carlsbad by the ten German federal states at the time. The conference was led by Metternich, a leading figure in the Vienna regime, and aimed at suppressing liberal and nationalist movements within the German Confederation. Conference participants from Weimar and Jena were in favor of the liberal policies. On September 20, the Carlsbad Decrees were passed.

“... I know more about Carlsbad than what I thought, but nothing more than one could expect. Participants from Weimar and Jena were being looked at in awe; the conversation began with reproaches and ended with regret. I hope that by the time I arrive, these would have been mostly resolved. (...)”

Letter No.2 (Addressed to his son August) [Released to the public for the first time]

Jena, 23 August 1819

This letter was written eight days after Letter No.1. The letter describes Goethe's compliments and presentation of *West-Eastern Divan* to the granddaughters of Grand Duke Karl August, Marie and Augusta.

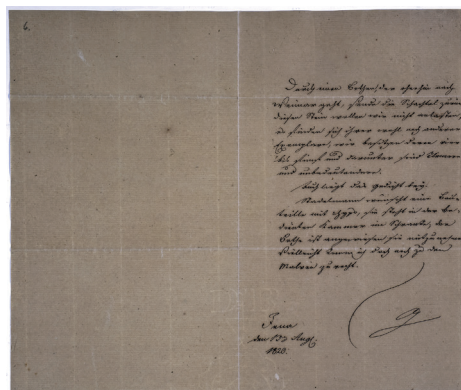


“... Two *West-Eastern Divans* are enclosed for the princesses (Marie and Augusta). Please discuss with advisor Meyer whether to color and gild the etching on the front page, either before or after binding. Ottilie (wife of Goethe's son, August) would then do her part by running the pen across... Have a good trip! G.”

Letter No. 3 (Addressed to his son August) [Released to the public for the first time]

Jena, 13 August 1820

This letter was written when Goethe was 70 years old. He studied mineralogy and was a rock collector throughout his life.



“Send the box back by asking a messenger who is going to Weimar. We don't want to touch this stone; there are probably other things that can replace this stone. We own four or five of them, some are smaller and more important. (...)”

Letter No. 4 (Addressed to his son August)

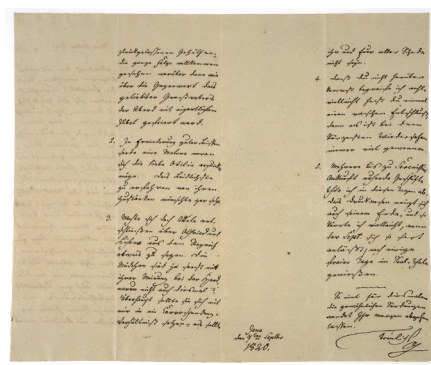
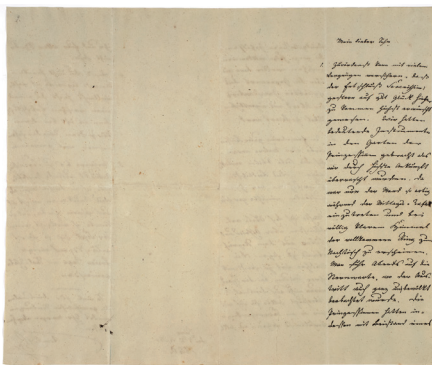
Jena, 7 September 1820

This letter was written a month after Letter No. 3. In this letter, Goethe describes

watching the eclipse with Grand Duke Karl August and his granddaughters.

"... When we brought important instruments to the princesses' garden, we were surprised by the arrival of the respected Grand Duke (Karl August). The moon was extremely kind and started overlapping with the sun during lunch, and when we were having desserts after lunch, a complete ring appeared in the clear sky.

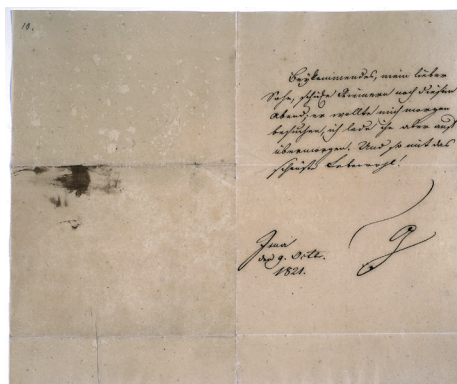
In the evening, we went to the observatory and watched the moon appearing in the clear sky. The princesses, who had asked for help from a helper who was left behind, managed to see a part of it from the beginning till the end. Thanks to them, that evening was celebrated with great joy, as if a loving grandfather (Grand Duke Karl August) had come to visit. (...)"



Letter No. 5 (Addressed to his son August) [Released to the public for the first time]  
Jena, 9 October 1821

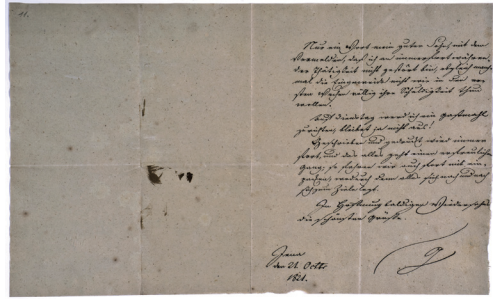
This letter was written when Goethe was 72 years old. It seems to refer to Friedrich Wilhelm Riemer, a professor at Weimar Gymnasium and an assistant librarian. He was the tutor for Goethe's son August.

"My beloved son, send the following to Riemer tonight. He wanted to visit me tomorrow, but I'm putting it off until the day after tomorrow. Bon voyage!"



Letter No. 6 (Addressed to his son August) [Released to the public for the first time]  
Jena, 21 October 1821

This letter was written 12 days after Letter No. 5. Here, Goethe reported that his work has been going smoothly. He was at this time engaged in the journal he edited, *Kunst und Altertum* (Art and Antiquity), which was published for artistic and scholarly work.

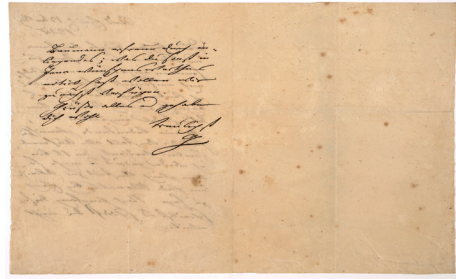
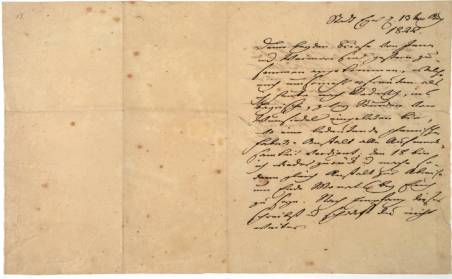


“My dear son, although my work continues without interruption, sometimes my organs don’t want to do their job as they did in the first few weeks.  
On Tuesday I am meeting some guests for a meal!  
Writing and printing work are still ongoing, and everything is going well.  
Hope to see you again soon.”

Letter No. 7 (Addressed to his son August) [Released to the public for the first time]  
\*This letter was fully handwritten by Goethe  
Eger, 13 August 1822

This letter was written when Goethe was 72 years old. Eger (now Cheb, Czech Republic), where this letter was written, is located 40 km northwest of the spa town of Carlsbad. Letter No.8 was also written at this place.

“Your two letters from Jena and Weimar arrived together yesterday. I am even more pleased today as I was invited to visit Redwitz an der Rodach, Bavaria, two hours away from Wunsiedel. There is a very important chemical plant there that needs attention. I will return on the 18<sup>th</sup> and will make immediate arrangements to visit you at the end of the month. Once you receive this, there is no need to write or send letters anymore. (...)”

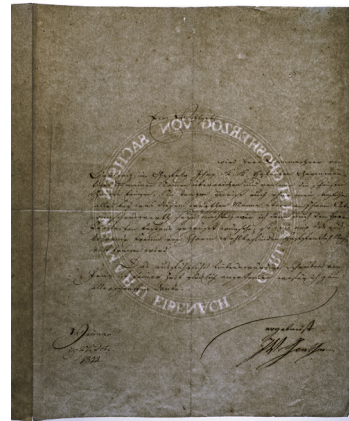


**Letter No. 8 (Addressed to philologist Joseph Stanislaus Zauper)**

**Weimar, 27 December 1822**

Letter signed with "J.W.v. Goethe." The paper has a watermark of Grand Duke Karl August's portrait. It was said that this was written as an official document.

This letter is addressed to Joseph Stanislaus Zauper (1784-1850), a philologist who was a professor at a middle school in Pilsen (now Plzeň, Czech Republic). In 1821, Zauper published the *Basic Features of a German Theoretical-Practical Poetics Developed from Goethe's works*.



In the letter, he introduced Friedrich August v. Beulwitz, the Grand Chamberlain of Weimar at that time to Zauper. At that time, Beulwitz was accompanying Grand Duke of Weimar, Karl August, and his wife Maria Pavlovna on their trip to Eger (now Cheb, Czech Republic) to meet Russian Emperor Alexander (Maria Pavlovna's brother).

**Letter No. 9 (Addressed to his son August) [Released to the public for the first time]**

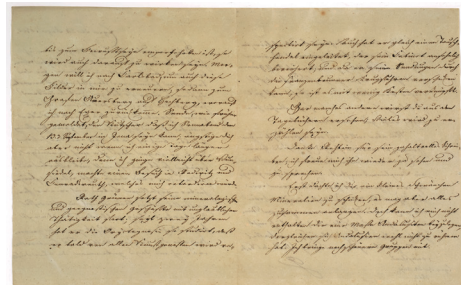
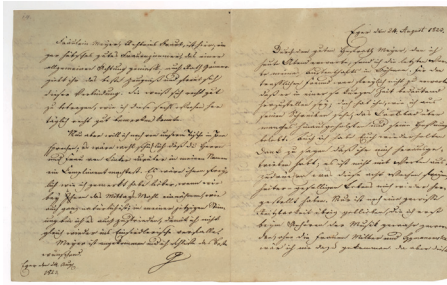
**Eger, 24 August 1823**

This letter was written when Goethe was 73 years old. Listening to the music played by two women, Goethe was afflicted by the memories of his beloved Ulrike von Levetzow. The day after writing this letter, Goethe traveled to Carlsbad to see her, but his love remained unrequited. The famous Marienbad Elegy was written on his way home in September.

"... It is impossible to express in words how the last eight weeks of freedom,



merriment, and socializing have restored me. Only certain frustration remains, which I only realized after listening to music. Without the two women, Milter (singer) and Szymanowska (pianist), I would never have felt this way. But now that this has risen to my consciousness, I will have to work on it. Tomorrow I will go to Carlsbad to refresh my memory (...)"



### 3 Records of the Opening Ceremony

#### (1) Greetings by Soka University President Masashi Suzuki

As introduced, I am Suzuki (Masashi), the President of Soka University.

It is with great pleasure that we are able to hold the opening ceremony of the Soka University Collection: Treasures of Goethe exhibition today.

I would like to express my gratitude to First Secretary Dr. Soehne Grothusen the Director of Culture Department from the German Embassy, and all distinguished guests here today. Thank you very much for your participation.

On November 15, Soka University founder Mr. Daisaku Ikeda passed away. Here, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to many who have poured in their condolence messages and offered their condolence.

This exhibition commemorates the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Founder's 1<sup>st</sup> Special Lecture titled "Goethe the Man" delivered in 2003. We will introduce a digest of the lecture which has been recorded at that time in the latter half of this ceremony.

The founder was engaged with Goethe's writings from the time when he was around the same age as the students (here today). It is said to be the post-war period between 1947 to 1948 when the founder was around 19 to 20.

Since then, the founder has discussed Goethe in many books, including "My View on Human Character" (1978), "My Anthropology" (1988), and "The Books from My Youth Part 2" (1993), etc. In 1995, he gave a lecture entitled "Toward the Dawn of Twenty-first Century

Civilization" at Ateneo de Santander in Spain (talking along with Goethe's struggles when writing the *Faust*).

For these achievements, the founder received a special commendation from the Goethe Society in Weimar Germany in 2009 as "the person who most deeply understands Goethe and has devoted himself to peace and humanity. This year marks the 15<sup>th</sup> year of the award.

The university has been collecting valuable materials related to individuals who have contributed to the peace, culture, and education of humankind. This is to protect the intellectual heritage of humankind and serves to educate students who will shoulder the future. In the valuable materials, the exhibition will display the first editions of Goethe's books and his handwritten letters.

Founder Ikeda spoke highly of Goethe's life as a "global citizen" as well as his endless literary creativity. This idea of creative "global citizenship" is certainly becoming more and more important in today's world, which is still in the throes of war and turmoil.

I hope that this exhibition will allow all the students, faculty staff, and members of the public to learn the spirit and life of Goethe, and find your vigor for tomorrow.

This concludes my message. Thank you very much.

**(2) Greetings by First Secretary Dr. Soehnke Grothusen, Director of Culture Department from the German Embassy**

Dear President Prof. Suzuki,

Dear Mr. Tashiro,

Dear Prof. Mori,

ladies and gentlemen,

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe was not only a supreme poet, a man of science and also a politician, but a man of letters in the proverbial sense. He wrote about 5,000 letters in his lifetime. The 1,015 that he exchanged with his friend Friedrich Schiller belong to the highest treasures of German literature.

Goethe and Schiller are called the "Dichturfürsten" or "poet princes" of the Golden Age of German literature, the "Weimarer Klassik". Therefore the nine letters, that visitors of the "Treasures of Goethe Exhibition" of Soka University can marvel at, will raise the heartbeat of any culture-loving German. It is deeply moving to see the lines that Goethe beautifully wrote to his only surviving child, his son August. But also the other exhibits that you can see here are more than worth to take notice of.

The novel "The Sorrows of Young Werther" from 1774 is one of the founding

documents of romanticism as such. And the novel “Wilhelm Meister’s Years of Travel” is the masterpiece of the genre of “Bildungsroman” – a genre that is still known under the German word worldwide.

“Bildung” – a term that can be only imperfectly translated by “education” – was maybe the most important concept in Goethe’s thought. “Bildung” was his idea to lead a life to discover the true richness and happiness of one’s own personality, to realize a divine harmony with society and the cosmos as such.

And those are the thoughts that have, it seems to me, also inspired the founder of Soka Gakkai (International), former president Daisaku Ikeda to give his speech on “Goethe the Man” in 2003. Also in the name of Ambassador Dr. Clemens von Goetze, I would like to express my heartfelt sympathy to all students, professors, and staff members of Soka Gakkai for the recent loss of Mr. Ikeda.

To realize this exhibition about Goethe is also a tribute to the anniversary of Mr. Ikeda’s lecture about the poet, whose ideas about Bildung inspired him profoundly. Thank you very much.

### **(3) Congratulatory Message from Dr. Yoshihito Mori, the former President of Goethe-Gesellschaft in Japan**

I am deeply saddened to hear the passing of the founder of Soka University, Mr. Daisaku Ikeda, and would like to express my deepest condolences for his passing and my appreciation for his great achievements.

I am very grateful that the “Treasures of Goethe Exhibition,” held in commemoration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Soka University founder’s lecture, has allowed all of us gathered here to see these precious artifacts, and to think about the Goethe era and Goethe himself.

It was said that the spiritual development of the German Enlightenment had developed with Kant’s critical philosophy and Goethe as its two focal points. Rudolf Eucken drew great attention to the fact that while Kant, who clearly distinguishes between appearances and things themselves, and Goethe, who cannot separate the world into phenomena and beings were philosophically different, their ideas together contributed greatly to the development of the era.

The foundation of Goethe’s thought is clearly expressed in the “Formation and Metamorphosis of Organic Nature” (Bildung und Umbildung organischer Naturen), which he published in the collection of essays “On Morphology” that he wrote over a period of seven years. It is an “anthropology” that unfolds through embracing nature and being embraced by nature and sees its highest realization in humankind, resulting in the realization of the

universal ideal of "Humanity (Humanität)." It can be said that only with the writings of Goethe that the stage was set for the multifaceted and productive spiritual activities of the time, often described as the modern Renaissance.

Goethe states that the artist returns the art that one has created with gratitude – a second nature, a humanly perfected nature that can be felt and thought about. These concepts of resonance with nature and connection to nature were consistent from *The Sorrows of Young Werther* to the completion of "Faust" in his later years, and paved the way for creative, novel forms and perceptions in the realms of religion, society, and cultural sciences, surpassing the experiential boundaries of the nineteenth-century. It was not until around the year 1900 and thereafter, that the appreciation and understanding for works such as "Elective Affinities," "West-Eastern Divan," and "Faust, Part II" matured, according to literary history (Fritz Martini).

Goethe's works, like nature itself, are vast and profound, as expressed in verses of his poem Dedication, calming the anxious thoughts of the earth and softening the day and brightening the night. However, it is up to the readers to be in the right frame of mind to appreciate these works. This reminds me of the passage from "Faust, Part I" (V.403-4) in which an ancient sage addressed his disciple: "The world of spirits is not closed: Your senses are: your heart is dead!" (Die Geisterwelt ist nicht verschlossen; / Dein Sinn ist zu, dein Herz ist tot!).

The significance of this commemorative exhibition: "Treasures of Goethe Exhibition" is truly profound, offering us the opportunity to directly connect with Goethe's inspiration and to ponder what Goethe would convey to us today. My deepest respect and gratitude for the efforts of the organizers for holding such a meaningful event.

#### **(4) Greetings by Soka University Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Yasunori Tashiro**

Greetings everyone. I am Yasunori Tashiro, Chairperson of the Board of Trustees of Soka University.

I would like to express my appreciation to all of you for joining the opening ceremony of the Soka University Collection – Treasures of Goethe Exhibition despite your busy schedule. Many gratitude to First Secretary Dr. Soehnke Grothusen (from the Embassy of the Federal Republic of Germany) and Prof. Yoshihito Mori who kindly gave us a commemorative address. Thank you very much.

Soka University Founder, Mr. Daisaku Ikeda, passed away on November 15<sup>th</sup>. For 53 years since the establishment of the University in 1971, Mr. Ikeda has always wholeheartedly encouraged the students with the principle of "student first."

Three years after the University's founding, which was 50 years ago in 1973, we

held the first summer lectures open to the general public. At this event, Mr. Ikeda delivered a speech titled “Literature and Buddhism,” where he discussed the relationship between Buddhism and famous Japanese literature such as “Man’yōshū (Anthology of Ten Thousand Leaves),” “The Tale of Genji,” and “Essays in Idleness (Tsurezuregusa).” Also, he quoted the words of great writers of the world in his speech at the entrance and graduation ceremonies and gave encouragement to the students. Tolstoy, Victor Hugo, Whitman, and of course, Goethe were among Mr. Ikeda’s favorite writers.

Twenty years from now on March 10, 2003, Mr. Ikeda held a special lecture titled “Goethe the Man” and delivered a lecture on the great man for about 90 minutes. It was held in the classrooms in the main building, with M401 as the main venue and M402 next door for a live stream viewing. The audience was mainly the fourth-year students who were about to graduate, and Mr. Ikeda gave them encouragement as they were about to soar into society.

It was 30 few years since the University’s founding at the time when he delivered the special lecture, and Mr. Ikeda called for us to further develop the university with a fresh heart as the second pioneering period. Around this time, the Founder also visited the campus often, participating in the classes and warmly encouraging every student he met.

The day of the Special lecture “Goethe the Man” marked a new page in the history of Soka University: the fruition of the Founder’s heart and the students’ hearts that sought the Founder.

Goethe the man was a great man of literature whom Mr. Ikeda cherished as words to live by in his youth when he met his mentor, Mr. Josei Toda. I remember as if it were only yesterday how the benevolent gaze and voice of the founder embraced the students like an affectionate father saying, “Good afternoon to all of you, ‘young Goethes’ of the present age!”

“Today, I would like to talk ... in plain, easily understandable language. ... I aim to give an enjoyable lecture that will leave you feeling happy and refreshed.”

Today, we are able to hold this Treasures of Goethe Exhibition, showcasing collections at Soka University including the first edition of *The Sorrows of Young Werther* and handwritten letters, in commemoration of the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Founder’s special lecture. We reported the holding of the exhibition to Mr. Ikeda earlier and received a message from him on November 1<sup>st</sup>, saying “Please send my best regards to everyone” .

With renewed determination, we will succeed and continue to pursue the grand goal of the Founder, to realize world peace and the happiness of the people.

Thank you very much for today.

**(5) Explanation of exhibits by Soka University Executive Vice President Ryohei Tanaka**

Please allow me to introduce the exhibits. The case on the left exhibits books published during Goethe's lifetime. "The Sorrows of Young Werther" and "Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship" on display are the first editions of the books.

Also, on display is the definitive edition of Goethe's complete works - known as "His final completed works" - in 61 volumes, which he supervised during his lifetime. The first 40 volumes were published before his death, while the rest were compiled and published by his assistant Eckermann and others posthumously.

The two exhibit cases in the center and the one on the right display nine handwritten letters of Goethe. Of which eight letters were addressed to August, the only son of Goethe who survived into adulthood, and are valuable artifacts as they include descriptions related to the *West-Eastern Divan* and "Marienbad Elegy" which are both masterpieces of Goethe in his later years.

All the letters are impressive, but the first, seventh, and ninth letters are particularly interesting. The first letter (dated August 15, 1819) describes the debate between the old regime and the liberals about the new German system after Napoleon's downfall, which culminated in the historically famous "Carlsbad Decrees" in September. The letter conveys the ambiance of what was happening right before it occurred.

The seventh letter (dated August 13, 1822) was fully handwritten by Goethe himself. Many of Goethe's letters were dictated to his secretary and signed with a capital "G" at the end. This letter in the University collection, however, was written directly by Goethe from the beginning to the end. We hope you can feel his vigor from the written words of Goethe.

The ninth and final letter (dated August 24, 1823) was from Goethe in his later years, just before he left for the town of Carlsbad where the woman of his love, Ulrike, lived. The love was never reciprocated, but on his way home, his masterpiece "Marienbad Elegy" was written. The letter is a heart-wrenching account of Goethe, telling his son what went on behind the scenes of his masterpiece.

Having outlined the exhibits, I would like to conclude with a few words about the collection of Goethe's letters. There are a total of six letters handwritten by Goethe that exist in Japan at the University of Tokyo, Kyoto University of Foreign Studies, and Tenri University combined, and a total of nine letters at the Soka University alone, which is the largest collection of letters in Japan. Moreover, seven out of the nine letters are on display in Japan for the very first time.

Since 2015, various research institutes, primarily in Germany, have been building a database containing information on the collection and distribution of Goethe's handwritten

letters which exist in approximately 200 locations worldwide. In addition, the Goethe and Schiller Archive in Germany is currently compiling and publishing the complete works of Goethe's letters in 38 volumes.

The recipients of Goethe's letters included not only those in literature and the arts, but also important figures of the time in various fields such as philosophy, science, and politics. Therefore, Goethe's correspondence is a first-class research data for understanding European history in the late 18th and early 19th centuries.

Goethe's letters are thus highlighted as extremely important resources, and we hope that you will enjoy this opportunity to see them firsthand.