The History of Kitasato Gakuen

After 9 years of research work in Koch Institute, Dr. Kitasato returned to Japan despite having been offered several positions, including a directorship at the Institute of Bacteriology in Cambridge, U.K. and professor chairs in the United States. Instead of accepting these offers, he came back to Japan to improve hygienic conditions in the country as well as to express his gratitude to Emperor Meiji who supported him financially during his stay in Germany (hence The Spirit of Gratitude). In 1892, with a financial support of Yukichi Fukuzawa, Dr. Kitasato built an Institute for Infectious Diseases. For the next 22 years, this institute provided home base for Dr. Kitasato’s activities, which included identification of disease causing agents such as Pasteurella pestis in 1894 and production of disease fighting drugs and sera (antibody containing blood). The institute’s motto was The Spirits of Wisdom and Practice.

In 1914, the extremely successful institute was suddenly ordered to come under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Education by the directive of Japanese Diet without any consultation to Dr. Kitasato. He resigned the directorship of the institute, and founded the Kitasato Institute on the neighboring ground. Since then, the institute flourished with the entrepreneurship of Dr. Kitasato and his students. To commemorate the success, the Kitasato Institute founded the Kitasato Gakuen (Academy) which now governs the Kitasato University and an affiliated college.

Dr. Kitasato’ gratitude:
To Emperor Meiji who supported him while studying in Germany
To Dr. Robert Koch who was his teacher and scientific mentor
To Yukichi Fukuzawa for financial and spiritual support.

Distinguished Students of Dr. Kitasato
Dr. Kiyoshi Shiga (1871–1957)
- Discovered Shigella, dysentery-causing bacteria in 1898
Dr. Saburo Hata (1873–1936)
- Discovered Shigella (shigella), as a cause of dysentery in 1902
Dr. Hideyo Noguchi (1876–1928)
- Discovered the cause of syphilis (Syphilis-causing pathogen)