One good indication of what an institution values is what it remembers. Though it fade beyond living memory, Juntendo will forever remain institutionally proud of its response to the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake. Not a single patient or staff member in Juntendo Hospital was lost when the western style wooden structure of that era burned to the ground. Fires raged for two days in Tokyo as water mains broke and Juntendo was left to its own devices to respond. Yet the dedication and quick, valiant actions of staff, the nursing staff most prominently, enabled evacuation of all ~100 patients, preventing a larger disaster.

Why is this historical anecdote still so proudly recounted? Please allow me an opinion as one recently arrived from another medical research institution. To me, the episode embodies the values that still permeate Juntendo’s hospitals, its research, and the education it imparts through the university’s medical and nursing faculties. The approach to both clinical care and research is very patient-centric and practical. What are the real problems that bring patients to the hospital, and how can we solve them? And how do we provide for patients’ safety and well-being while they are under our care? The answers are multifaceted, requiring both a commitment to staying on the forefront of medical advances and a dogged attention to seemingly more mundane aspects of hospital administration and care delivery.

As Juntendo Medical Journal moves to become more internationally accessible, its content will continue to reflect the breadth and character of medical research of the Juntendo Medical Society. In addition to two original research articles, this issue features farewell lectures by departing professors as well as a collection of articles wrestling with what policies and thinking can best lead to advances in the fight against cancer. The reminiscences and policy proposals each give their own glimpse into Juntendo’s character and values.

Robert F. Whittier
Division of Medical Education