



History of the Danish Deaconess Foundation School of Nursing

It all started in 1863 in the town of Frederiksberg near Copenhagen. Her Majesty the Queen Louise of Denmark was the founder of the Danish Deaconess Foundation School of Nursing. Queen Louise was inspired during an earlier visit to the Deaconess Foundation (a special religious order or nursing sisters) in Germany. Ever since, the Danish royal family has been the protector of the nursing school.

Miss Louise Conring became the first deaconess in Denmark after a visit of study in Stockholm and after being ordained as deaconess in the Evangelistic Lutheran Church. Subsequently, she became the first head of the nursing school at the Danish Deaconess Foundation.

The nursing education resembled an apprenticeship which was mainly composed of practical training. The nursing students, who were called sisters then, learned mostly about hygiene and making beds. At that time caring for the sick and needy was a disreputable job. These sisters, however, succeeded in transforming nursing into a respectable line of work by setting high standards of care.

In 1879, the theoretical dimension was for the first time introduced in the nursing education through the efforts of Sister Sophie Zahrtmann, who had spent several years as a deaconess in Strasbourg, France.

In 1910, in conformity with the Danish Red Cross and the Danish Nursing Council, the nursing education was reformed. Three dimensions were emphasized: 1) qualified technical nursing skills, 2) a general education as characterized by the Danish Folk High School, and 3) a thorough Christian education.

Ever since, the Danish Deaconess Foundation School of Nursing has adhered to the educational and legislative reforms, which have pertained to nursing education in general.

From 1987 to 1992, the Danish Deaconess Foundation School of Nursing was for an interim closed, following the closing of The Danish Deaconess Foundation Hospital Center, which meant that both the base for clinical education and the economic foundation of the nursing school had ceased to exist. However, in 1992, the county of Frederiksberg entered an agreement with the Danish Deaconess Foundation to take over the nursing education in the county. The nursing school and its heritage were revived.

Although being a Danish nurse was originally equivalent with being a deaconess, the Deaconess Foundation School of Nursing educated also nurses, who did not wish to become a deaconess. Today, the School of Nursing is structurally and administratively independent of the religious education of deacons and deaconesses.

The history of the Danish Deaconess Foundation School of Nursing reflects the importance of collaborating with nursing schools outside of Denmark. Today, our school collaborates with nursing schools within the Nordic Deaconess Foundation as well as other health institutions within the European Union. We are constantly expanding our international exchange program.

In short

1863

The Deaconess Foundation is founded in Frederiksberg

The nursing education is mainly practical training in hygiene and making beds

1879

Sister Sophie Zahrtmann introduces the theoretical dimension in the nursing education

1910

The nursing education is reformed

1987

The Deaconess Foundation School of Nursing is closed down

1992

The Deaconess Foundation School of Nursing is revived

2008

The nursing education is a clinical and theoretical education based on academic disciplines which awards the graduands a Bachelor Degree in Nursing

