

## 启发儿童智慧的奥秘34

Committee Head of Children's Association of Abacus Calculation Chen Wan Fa points out that when the association was established in 1991, it designed a testing method specially tailored to children. Over the course of five years, the number of participants grew from ten thousand to two hundred thousand, becoming one of Taiwan's most influential abacus calculation associations. Due to the implementation of the testing method, four and five year old children now have the opportunity to participate after just three months of study. This revolutionary innovation on the part of the Children's Association of Abacus Calculation is deeply welcomed by parents and teachers as it had come just in time for Taiwan's increasing standards in abacus and mental arithmetic and the decrease in learning age.

Currently Taiwan's abacus calculation associations include: Central Chamber of Commerce's abacus calculation committee, Abacus Association, International Abacus Association, Children's Association of Abacus Calculation, Taiwan Chamber of Commerce's committee for promoting abacus arithmetic, Chinese Utility Abacus Research Society, Chinese Abacus Academic Research Society and more. These organizations have contributed greatly to promoting abacus education and increasing skill standards, serving as one of the main motivators for the development of children's abacus and mental arithmetic in Taiwan.

On the other hand, abacus classes are gradually being intentionally neglected in the core educational system. In commercial vocational schools and junior colleges, abacus classes have gone from a twice a week compulsory course to once a week or elective. Abacus classes in elementary schools also face the fate of elimination. Those in the abacus and mental arithmetic industry ought to try and defend this situation in which the education authority is overlooking the functions and value of abacus and mental arithmetic education.

Mainland China

Su Wan Ting's motto:

Learning is like rowing a boat against the current. If you don't advance yourself, you will be washed away.

Currently, China's core elementary education includes an abacus class in the third grade, and an integration of the three forms of calculation (oral calculation, written calculation, abacus calculation) is being implemented in some schools in the first and second grades as a teaching experiment. Presently, there are more than two million students in forty thousand classes engaged in the experiment. This innovative teaching experiment is sponsored by the United Nations Educational,

Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). In 1995, the calculation skill has become part of the testing subjects for admission to higher education, and financial-related colleges and vocational high schools have included an abacus calculation class. In terms of teachers, there are over a million individuals who attend various short-term training each year.

Active promotion of children's abacus and mental arithmetic calculation began in 1991. Currently a total of twenty-three million kindergarten and elementary school children attend abacus and mental arithmetic classes, with Jilin Province alone making up fifteen million. There are two kinds of abacus and mental arithmetic classes. The first comes in the form of a second lesson in first and second grade; the second in the form of an afterschool "three-form calculation class" hobby group.

In recent years, over two million individuals per year participated in abacus tests in Mainland China. In 1995, the number exceeded three million, of which one million five hundred thousand passed. In the past decade, more than twenty-five million individuals have been tested; fifteen million passed and ten million were awarded certificates.

In addition, China's abacus calculation association and the Taiwan Chamber of Commerce's committee for promoting abacus arithmetic have been taking turns since 1991 hosting annual abacus arithmetic academic exchange activities between Taiwan and China as well as the junior abacus arithmetic friendship tournament. Since 1992, they began hosting the annual abacus arithmetic correspondence contest between Taiwan and China. The contest is divided into three groups: Society and college group, junior high group and elementary group. Contestants are tested in groups on the same problems and according to the same grading standards and time (the last Sunday of every May).

Learning abacus calculation prevents aging

Su Wan Ting's motto:

Think only of success, not of failure. On any given Sunday, any team can beat any other team.

In 1994, Osaka Prefecture University professor Dr. Toshio Hayashi published a research report on "the lifelong subject to study--abacus arithmetic." He proposed that abacus arithmetic has significant effects on senior medical treatment and health. Dr. Hayashi's research results received a great deal of attention from the press and the medical industry, causing a wave of research in "right brain development," "finger gymnastics" and related areas.

Dr. Hayashi has published several research reports related to abacus arithmetic and the elderly, such as "abacus arithmetic and the brain," "the elderly and abacus arithmetic," "anti-aging and abacus arithmetic," etc.