

# Long-term Study and the Story of the Chinese Bamboo

Parents and students are often told that Kumon study is a long-term program. The benefits of long-term study in Kumon are explained as mastery, self-confidence, motivation, self-learning, responsibility, independence, self-discipline, perseverance, and strong character.

These are all great attributes, but how does one define “long-term study”? Is it 12 months, 24 months, three years, longer? To get a better understanding of “long-term study,” we must first note that the goal of the Kumon Program is mastery of math and reading skills at high school or college levels.

If this is the goal that you would like to see your child achieve, then a progress goal can be made by your Kumon Instructor to estimate the time it will take to reach these levels. Most students will attain grade level within 1-2 years. After that, 1.5 levels per year is the desired achievement.

The beauty of the Kumon Method is that every child is treated as an individual and study is self-paced, so there are no boundaries to keep a child from achieving. The key to achievement in Kumon is consistency over a long period of time.

Achieving long-term benefits with Kumon study is similar to the story of the Chinese Bamboo.

“In the far east the people plant a tree called the Chinese bamboo. During the first four years they water and fertilize the plant with seemingly little or no results. Then in the fifth year they again apply water and fertilizer – and in five weeks’ time the tree grows ninety feet in height! The obvious question is: Did the Chinese bamboo grow ninety feet in five weeks, or did it grow ninety feet in five years? The answer is: It grew ninety feet in five years. Because if at any time during those five years the people had stopped watering and fertilizing the tree, it would have died.

Many times our dreams and plans appear not to be succeeding. We are tempted to give up and quit trying. Instead, we need to continue to water and fertilize those dreams and plans, nurturing the seeds of the vision we have within us. Because we know that if we do not quit, if we display perseverance and endurance, we will also reap a harvest.”<sup>1</sup>

The goal that you have for your child may be algebra or calculus in math, paraphrasing or summations in reading. Whatever the goal is, the Kumon Method is a tool to water and fertilize your child’s ability to achieve that goal. The longer a student is in the Kumon Program, the more nourishment he or she will have to grow. Repetition of worksheets with speed and accuracy on a daily basis is the water and fertilizer needed for adequate growth of academic skills.

As in the growth of Chinese bamboo, the effects of long-term study in Kumon may not appear in students until they have been studying for many years; but if they do not quit, then they will also reap a harvest.

<sup>1</sup> John L. Mason, *An Enemy Called Average*, 1990, p. 20.