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### Being a judge of the contest of the Five Lights Award

Watching the children's amazing performances of abacus and mental arithmetic on TV, the audience are amazed. Of course, the proponent behind these talented children is that their parents must be very proud of them.

One of the longest running TV programs in Taiwan, the Five Lights Award, was broadcast for 33 years from October 9 1965 to July 19 1998. It was considered as a forerunner of talent shows.

This variety show was broadcast by TTV and let anyone participate and show his or her talent. Each time there is a challenger who competes with the winning defender from the previous competition. The famous singer A-Mei participated in the singing competition and defeated all challengers to win the final championship. Later she became a very famous and influential artist.

The Five Lights Award show set a record of the highest rating audience: a 73.9% share in 1971, i.e. more than 70 households per 100 households in Taiwan often watched the show every weekend. This show was a shared memory of many people in Taiwan.

### Being invited as a judge of the lower-grader group

In 1998, the production team of the Five Lights Award show set up a section for abacus mental arithmetic called "Abacus Talent Golden Brain" and invited top-ranked abacus mental arithmetic teachers and their students to participate.

The production team heard that Tai Chiang Ching had been praised as one of the top teachers in the field of abacus mental arithmetic, so they sent him an invitation.

After Tai received the letter, he encouraged his student Su Wan-ting to participate in the group of higher-graders. Tai himself then accepted the invitation to attend the primary audition and select the most credible abacus mental arithmetic teacher with a good image and ability who could then judge the competition. Tai was

selected from dozens of candidates to be the judge of the group of lower-graders in the competition. The host of the program even introduced Tai Chiang Ching as “a tall, calm, and gentle man just like a scholar.”

The production team diligently put a great deal of time and effort in to prepare for the competition. Among the hundreds of children from all over Taiwan who joined the primary competition, only the top five were allowed to stay in the group to participate in the final round of competition. The five children would compete for the championship in the final contest on the show.

The host of the show described the scene: “Look at the children playing the abacuses in the air. They are getting answers that are much more amazingly accurate than the computer and electronic calculator.” The host also asked the audience to take out any calculating tools they had at home to compete with these contestants in order to see who could get the answer first. Of course, the five top children in abacus mental arithmetic could calculate addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of five to six digits of numbers and answered in only one minute. The contestants were divided into four groups. They were groups of

kindergarten children, lower-graders, middle-graders and higher-graders at elementary school. Each would select the top five contestants to participate in the final competition on the show. The first and second finalists could earn scholarships and trophies. However, after the Five Light Award show stopped broadcasting, the program for the competition of the higher-grader group was cut. Therefore, Su Wan-ting, who passed the primary competition as a part of the higher-grader group, was not able to perform her skills in abacus mental arithmetic on TV.

### The effect of the show

Although the show didn't continue broadcasting, the audience was impressed by the children's amazing skills in abacus mental arithmetic. When it was learned that abacus mental arithmetic was declining in Taiwan, other countries, especially those in Southeast Asia, started to pay attention, owing to the video recordings of the

Five Light Award being shown on TV there. Consequently, Tai Chiang Ching went to those countries to promote his franchise's enterprise, where crowds of people were attracted to see the power of the "Master of Abacus Talent."

Tai Chiang Ching earned this reputation because he had insisted on doing his best from the very beginning of his journey. It has proven that if you put in more effort in the present, you will be successful in the future. Maybe Tai didn't expect his CMA organisation to spread all over the world. However, once you have started your path in a positive manner, you will surely get a chance to achieve your goals step by step.