SUMMARY

What is the serialization of films?:

on the subject of the "Zatôichi" series of Daiei Kyoto Studios

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This paper focuses on the first three films of the Daiei Kyoto Studios' "Zatôichi" series: "Zatôichi Monogatari" (directed by Kenji Misumi), "Zoku Zatôichi Monogatari" (directed by Kazuo Mori) and "Shin Zatôichi Monogatari" (directed by Tokuso Tanaka). We examine the process of serialization from an artistic point of view and explore its significance for the artistic expressions.

Although those three films are all written by Minoru Inuzuka, each one has its own characteristics.

For "Zatôichi Monogatari", the director Misumi revised the scenario and made Ichi speak more politely. As a result, the protagonist became more lovable. Misumi also changed the happy ending and made the film end with a parting scene. That gave it a trait of the tales of wandering gamblers and the possibility to develop into film series. The parting at the end is one of the typical features of serialized films.

"Zoku Zatôichi Monogatari" took the same way and it gave the impression of being a sequel. At the same time, the director Mori added a rhythmical contrast to the scenario by amplifying the compassion and the laughter. The love and the hatred of Ichi were highlighted.

In "Shin Zatôichi Monogatari", the director Tanaka created Ichi as a weak human being that the audience could relate to more.

All three films were produced as "program pictures" in the same factory line. That gave them a resemblance and made them so easy to understand that the audience could simply enjoy them. These characteristics were repeated and amplified in the subsequent films. For example, the filmmakers elaborated the scenes of Iai-giri in various ways. In all those films, the same actor, Shintarô Katsu, continued to play the role of Ichi and the same crews continued to work even after the bankruptcy of Daiei. Those were also the important factors to make the film series possible.