The Development of the Commercial TV Business and the Change of People’s Lives during Japan’s Period of Rapid Economic Growth

ISHIKAWA Ken

This article positions the development of the commercial TV business as an aspect of Japan’s rapid economic growth mechanism, aiming to clarify the formation of the system of production and distribution of TV contents that supported such development.

People’s lives in Japan have changed significantly through rapid economic growth. One example of such change through rapid economic growth was the advent of TV broadcasting, which started in 1953 and was realized by the growth mechanism of the expansion in domestic demand. The development of the commercial TV business particularly boosted the expansion of domestic demand in two respects: development of the machine industry through the spread of television sets, and the establishment of TV ads in corporate advertising activities through added media value. The attempt to establish value in commercial TV media was the first step towards establishing a system for the distribution and production of TV contents.

One of the problems facing the commercial TV business was how they could enrich TV contents with the production cost determined by the media value in the process of their spreading. This was achieved by utilizing imported TV contents, supported by the foreign exchange allocation system for TV, and contributing to the spread of TV sets. The commercial TV business prepared a domestic production system while sharing interests with Japanese movie companies, and established a TV contents production system in the mid-1960s.

At the same time, while the business of commercial TV contents was stabilized by systematic and technological factors, key stations started engaging in network competition, in line with the opportunistic actions of local stations. A system for the distribution of TV contents was established in the mid-1960s through mutual cooperation between key stations and local stations while also reflecting the interests of advertising agencies and sponsors that found business opportunities in TV ads. It was a further step including establishing TV ads in the advertising activities of sponsors, which were closely related to changes in people’s lifestyles.

Key words: Foreign exchange allocation system for TV, Commercial TV business, TV contents, Japanese movie companies, TV ad