

次の英文を読んで、設問に答えなさい。

Comics are flourishing today in America and Western Europe and in the socialist nations of the world, where they play an important role in information transmission and help shape the feelings and attitudes of children and young adults. The situation in Japan is no different. Each year, printing presses on this little island nation in the Far East produce hundreds of millions of comic books and magazines for tens of millions of readers. There are over 3,000 (1)active artist. (A)Comics in Japan have not prospered so much as exploded into a phenomenon of extraordinary proportions. Just as (1), however, is that until recently information about Japan's vast comics culture had been hardly (2) at all in the West, and even now individual comic stories are rarely introduced to Western readers.

The isolation of the Japanese comic clearly has to do with the way it is published. Background notes and word balloons of Japanese comics must of course be printed in Japanese, which is totally (3) for most foreign readers to understand; translations are rarely provided. Also, Japanese comics, like other Japanese publications, are read from right to left, making them hard to follow visually for people (2) used to reading in the opposite direction. (B)Simply as an object to be read, then, a Japanese comic in its raw form is not easily accepted in the West. Rather, it is ignored.

There is also the matter of cultural distance. The Japanese comic is (4) for Japanese readers who share particular attitudes and customs, many of which are (5) outside of Japan. There are, therefore, going to be lots of Japanese comics that simply cannot be understood unless the reader is Japanese. But (C)this is really not the obstacle it might first appear to be, for there are also numerous Japanese comics that can be fully understood — and enjoyed — on an international level, as many foreign fans who can read Japanese comics in their original form will say.

This is why Japanese animation — which is spoken in the local language and doesn't confuse the viewer by (D)"reading" in one direction or another — has been able to open the door for Japanese comics overseas where printed materials have (E)failed. Having solved the problem of language, animation, with its broad appeal, has in fact become Japan's supreme ambassador, not just in the West but in the Middle East and Africa, in South America, in Southeast Asia, and even in China. The entry port is almost always TV. In France the children love watching

Goldorak. Doraemon is a huge hit in Southeast Asia and Hong Kong. Chinese youngsters all sing the theme to Astro Boy.

Thanks to animation, people in other countries have begun to learn what Japanese comics are like. Fans go off in search of comics based on their favorite long animation films and in doing so (3)come across other kinds of Japanese comics. Contacts between Japanese comic artists and animators and (F)their counterparts in other nations have grown more and more productive, and here and there one now begins to find (4)items about the world of Japanese comics in foreign papers and magazines.

Still, foreigners living in Japan are truly amazed when they first discover just how big the boom in Japanese comics has become. Daily they are surrounded by examples of the vitality of comics culture that would be unthinkable in their own countries. A Japanese businessman on his way to work sits on the train with his nose buried in a children's comic book. That same comic, in a single week, might sell 2.5 million copies. And in that same week on TV there will be more than thirty completely new episodes in Japanese-made comic-animation series. The Japanese comics industry first began to show signs of heating up to (G)this fever pitch after World War II. Big piles of Western comics were imported, and had a tremendous impact.

Regardless of what language they are printed in, comics are an important form of expression that crosses all national and cultural boundaries, they are great fun, and they can (5)further peace and friendship among nations. Humor in comics can be refined and intellectual, and it has the power to raise the level of all people's understanding. I believe that comics culture will continue to grow and develop.

A. 下線部(1)～(5)の意味として最も適当なものをそれぞれア～エから一つずつ選び、その記号をマークしなさい。

(1) 'active'

ア. earnest

イ. working

ウ. alive

エ. effective

(2) 'used'

ア. employed

イ. utilized

ウ. accustomed

エ. treated

(3) 'come across'

ア. find by chance

イ. get possession of

ウ. seize suddenly

エ. move from one side to the opposite side of

(4) 'items'

ア. technical explanations

イ. news stories

ウ. single units in a list

エ. pamphlets

(5) 'further'

ア. progress

イ. moreover

ウ. additional

エ. promote

B. 下線部(A)の意味に最も近いものをそれぞれア～エから一つずつ選び、その記号をマークしなさい。

ア. Comics have not flourished yet in Japan.

イ. There is a tendency in Japan that comics are not accepted.

ウ. Japan has had various kinds of comics in proportion to the increase in population.

エ. Japanese comics have boomed on a large scale.

C. 空所(1)～(5)に入れるのに最も適切な語をそれぞれア～オから一つずつ選び、その記号をマークしなさい。

ア. designed

イ. impossible

ウ. incredible

エ. unknown

オ. available

D. 下線部(D)(E)(F)の具体的な意味としてもっとも適切なものをそれぞれア～エから一つずつ選び、その記号をマークしなさい。

(D) '“reading” in one direction or another'

ア. 漫画を読む場合に、右から読んだり左から読んだりすること。

イ. 漫画を読む場合に、左から右へ読むこと。

ウ. 漫画を読む場合に、右から左へ読むこと。

エ. 漫画を読む場合に、意味を取り違えること。

(E) 'failed'

ア. been lacking for comics

イ. been unable to open the door

ウ. not been produced

エ. not been available to anyone

(F) 'their counterparts'

- ア. comic artists and animators
- イ. animation films
- ウ. foreign papers and magazines
- エ. other kinds of Japanese comics

E. 下線部(G)の内容を最もよく表しているものをア～エから一つ選び、その記号をマークしなさい。

- ア. 毎年何千万人の読者に対して、西洋の漫画が大量に輸入されていること
- イ. 日本のビジネスマンが電車の中で子ども向けの漫画を読んだり、テレビでは週に三十本以上に及ぶ日本製アニメが放映されていること
- ウ. アニメーションは西洋ばかりではなく中東、アフリカ、南米、東南アジア、中国においても、日本の最上の親善大使になっていること
- エ. 日本の漫画は国際的に十分理解されていて、たくさんの外国人のファンがいること

F. 本文の内容と一致するものを次のア～クから二つ選び、その記号をマークしなさい。

- ア. Japanese animation has been more successful overseas than printed comics.
- イ. The word balloons of Japanese comics have sometimes exploded extraordinarily.
- ウ. Japanese comics are uniquely designed for culturally distant foreign readers.
- エ. From time to time now foreign magazines have stories about Japanese comics.
- オ. All European comics are printed in several languages so that they can easily cross national and cultural boundaries.
- カ. Comics are great fun, and therefore not so important in the transmission of information.
- キ. Because of the vitality of comics culture, more and more foreigners want to live in Japan.
- ク. Japanese comics can only be understood by Japanese readers.

G. 下線部(B)(C)を日本語に訳し、記入しなさい。ただし、(c)は'this'が指すものを明確にして訳しなさい。