

[III] 次の英文を読んで、下記の設問に答えなさい。

¶ 1 *Rakugo* can be described as a popular comic art performed by one person. One must be able to have the skill of creating a stage, background, and atmosphere in the minds of the audience and also be able to play the parts of the characters that appear in the stories being told. Here is an example of such a *rakugo*.

¶ 2 One owner of a shop made a lot of money in his business, employing a head clerk and several employees. But when one is successful, one hesitates to use money. So he thought that if he decreased the number of his employees, he could save more money; this, in turn, would mean he would make more money. So he dismissed one employee after another, until he had dismissed everyone except his wife and himself. He thought that business would carry on even without his wife, so he kicked her out of the house, so that only he remained. Then he thought that business would be just fine even without himself, so he tied a rope around his neck and hanged himself.

¶ 3 *Rakugo* stories usually end with an *ochi*, or a punchline. It is interesting to examine what kind of things people laughed at in the Edo period.

¶ 4 The standard of living for most common people in the cities was very low then. There must have been many people within the audience who worked for employees paying little money and many who were unemployed. Everyone knew that every penny was precious, and many people were just managing to live. Even such silly *rakugo* stories had a real place in their everyday lives. The *rakugo* quoted was composed during the Edo period, but its content still signifies a real situation even in these recent times. There are many employers who will do anything for a profit, even to the extent of cutting their own throats. These kinds of occurrences are not limited to Japan alone, but reach across borders to other nations such as America. In such ways, many classic *rakugo* stories, although old, still have an appeal beyond time and place.

¶ 5 Toward the end of the Edo period, Encho Sanyutei was rated number one among the professional *rakugo* performers. He established *rakugo* as a more formal stage art that gained much popularity. Sanyutei was not satisfied, however, with the mass appeal of *rakugo*. He tried to restrict the art to storytelling rather than relying on the use of stage settings and other devices. During the Meiji period, his efforts were realized with the establishment of

rakugo as a form of performing art, but there was no guarantee that the art of *rakugo* would be successfully passed on to future generations. Sanyutei's students concentrated on bringing the content of *rakugo* back to the level of the common people. The attitude of the *rakugo* performers also changed from that of viewing *rakugo* as a mere art form to that of a total way of life. It was Shinsho who faithfully put this new attitude into practice. Shinsho influenced and contributed tremendously to the world of *rakugo* by including aspects of real life in his own performances.

A. ①から⑥について、本文の内容に合うものをそれぞれ1つ選び、マークしなさい。

①

- (1) In a *rakugo* story only one character appears.
- (2) A *rakugo* performer must not pay attention to the audience.
- (3) In a *rakugo* performance, of the performers on the stage, only one speaks at a time.
- (4) *Rakugo* is said to be an art performed on the stage by one person skillful at telling stories.

② In the story quoted as an example of a *rakugo*, the owner of the shop

- (1) wanted to pay more to his workers.
- (2) was very rich and lived a happy life.
- (3) thought that his business would carry on without him.
- (4) was very disappointed in his business and killed himself.

③

- (1) *Rakugo* was not so popular in Edo.
- (2) *Rakugo* stories mostly end with a punchline.
- (3) *Rakugo* from the first was separated from the life of ordinary people.
- (4) *Rakugo* was introduced as a popular comic art during the Meiji period.

④ A *rakugo* performer is required

- (1) to tell many silly stories on the street.

- (2) to establish *rakugo* as a popular hobby.
- (3) to have the skill to play the parts of many characters.
- (4) to comfort unhappy workers and encourage their masters.

5

- (1) *Rakugo* replaced *manzai* in popularity.
- (2) The content of *rakugo* stories can often be understood abroad, in America, for instance.
- (3) Beyond doubt, the art of *rakugo* will be successfully handed down to future generations forever.
- (4) *Rakugo* stories may actually make a shop owner tie a rope around his neck and hang himself for more profit.

6

- (1) Encho was the first professional *rakugo* performer in *rakugo* history.
- (2) Encho called the *rakugo* developed in the Edo period "classic *rakugo*."
- (3) Encho created so many fine stories that his followers did not make any new ones.
- (4) Encho made efforts to establish *rakugo* as a form of performing art during the Meiji period.

B. 本文の表題として最も適切なものを1つ選び、マークしなさい。

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- (1) *Rakugo* and Laughter
- (2) Two *Rakugo* Performers
- (3) *Rakugo* in the Edo Period
- (4) The Development of *Rakugo*

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コメント
ある程度なじみがある題材で、単語も難解なものはなく、設問も丁寧に読んでいけば解ける問題。センターの長文と同じくらいのレベル。

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