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| Kenichi Enomoto (1904–1970) |
| 榎本 健一 |
| Japanese comedian, also known as Enoken, Enomoto initially created popular musical comedies in Tokyo’s downtown entertainment district Asakusa. His comedy style, containing elements from both Japanese and Western theatre and popular entertainment, was a product of modernism and liberalism of the Taishō period (1912-1926) – the age of *ero-guro-nansensu* (literally, ‘erotic, grotesque, nonsense’), erotically charged, frightfully new and nonsensical but attractive. His musical comedy led to the birth of the current-day *wasei* (Japanese style) musicals.  Born in Tokyo, Enomoto became a student of the Asakusa Opera singer Yanagida Teiichi and made his stage debut in 1922 as chorus member of Negishi Opera Company. After the 1923 Great Kantō Earthquake, he moved to Kyoto and played many minor roles in silent film. In 1929 Enomoto returned to Asakusa and joined the theatre company Casino Folies specializing in western style revues and variety shows. In 1930 he formed his own troupe New Casino Folies. His comic and energetic acting and amusing and speedy dialogues, inspired by Western cabaret performance and Hollywood talkies, were introduced in novelist Kawabata Yasunari’s *The Scarlet Gang of Asakusa* serialized in *The Asahi Newspaper* (1929-1930) and gained high popularity. |
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