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| Takarazuka |
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| The Takarazuka Revue (*Takarazuka kagekidan*) is an all-female troupe founded by Kobayashi Ichizō (1873-1957) in 1913 as a device to generate business on the railway and hot spring resort owned and operated by Kobayashi and the Hankyū Railway. The troupe takes its name from the city of Takarazuka just northwest of Osaka. The commercial promotion was such a success that the city is now better known for the Takarazuka Revue than for its hot springs. Today, the company has two large theatres, one in Takarazuka and one in Tokyo, and five troupes, Flower, Moon, Snow, Star, and Cosmos, that take turns performing in Takarazuka, Tokyo, and on national tours.  Kobayashi capitalized on the recently lifted ban on female performers, the declining interest in traditional kabuki, and the rising interest in Western music and revues. There was a spirited debate around the propriety of females in the theatre. Actors had the derogatory label ‘beggars of the riverbed,’ and Japanese performing arts had a history of eroticism and prostitution. To avoid any such taint on his new troupe, Kobayashi established a private girls high school as a finishing school for girls that was the pipeline for revue talent. The troupe maintains its conservative reputation for producing young women with traditional values who are also well-trained performers. |
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