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| **Ofuji, Noburo (June 1, 1900-July 28, 1961)** |
| **[Enter any *variant forms* of your headword – OPTIONAL]** |
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| Noburo Ofuji was a Japanese animator and animation director. He is most well-known for animated works that use traditional *chiyogami* – brightly coloured paper printed with woodblock patterns – and the innovative incorporation of colour, movement, and sound. Inspired by Lotte Reiniger’s similar work with paper cut-outs, Ofuji began to make his own films in the early 1920s and soon established his own studio. While cut-outs were a common animation technique due to their cost-effectiveness, Ofuji stood out by tinting the celluloid of his films in order to convey the bright textures and patterns of *chiyogami*. His *Song of Spring* (1931) is an example of this, as the film uses vibrant pink *chiyogami* to create evocative kaleidoscopic patterns of swirling cherry blossoms.  Ofuji’s experimentation with layers of animated images is also noteworthy. Thomas LaMarre notes that Ofuji’s animation stand, which used multiple glass planes separated by a few inches, in many ways prefigured the invention of the multiplane camera. While most of Ofuji’s films do not utilise this technology, his *Chinkoroheibei Tamatebako* [*Chinkoro Heibei and the Treasure Box*] (1936) incorporated filmmaking techniques from the cinema, such as irises and mattes, in order to focus audience attention on particular areas of the screen. Ofuji was also one of the first animators to embrace the use of cinematic sound in his short films. His *Kuro Nyago* [Black Cat] (1928) featured music synchronised to a pre-recorded jazz record, predating the first ‘official’ talkie of Japan’s cinema by three years. |
| Further reading:  (Animation no senkakusha: Ofuji Noburo kokou no tensai [Animation Pioneer: Ofuji Noburo, Solitary Genius])  (Clements)  (LaMarre)  (The Roots of Japanese Anime: Until the End of WWII)  (Yamaguchi) |