

The Japan Foundation Touring Film Programme 2010  
Girls on Film: Females in Contemporary Japanese Cinema

**Non-ko (*Non-ko 36-sai: Kaji Tetsudai*)**

Dir: Kazuyoshi Kumakiri

Cast: Maki Sakai, Gen Hoshino, Shingo Tatsumi

2008/ 35mm/105min/ Colour / English Subtitles



Nobuko (Maki Sakai) tried to be successful as an actress in Tokyo (with the stage name 'Nonko'), but wasn't popular. She married her manager and soon divorced. Now a once-divorced woman in her mid-30s, she returns home to the Shinto shrine that her family runs to help out with domestic chores. Her father is always in a stubborn rage while her mother is always trying to calm things down. Nonko's married sister, who already has a daughter, scathingly says of Nonko, "It's all over for her." There's no place to run to and no place to belong, just a backwards little country town. The only thing Nonko has to pass her time is cycling to her friend's bar to drink with the owner, another divorcee. She can't remember the last time she got dressed up or had sex. Nonko, who is totally lacking in ambition, encounters a young man named Masaru (Gen Hoshino) who has great expectations about selling chicks at the shrine festival. Nonko ends up taking him to the house of Yasukawa, who allots space for festival stalls. Masaru is rather naïve and pitiable, but this earnest and straightforward younger man puts a smile back on Nonko's face and she gradually becomes more emotionally and physically receptive, until her ex-husband, Udagawa (Shingo Tatsumi), makes his appearance.

Kazuyoshi Kumakiri, who commanded global attention for his debut movie, *Kichiku*, adapted his own original story into this romantic film. The sentiment and physiology of a Japanese woman in her 30s are portrayed here with his distinctive style.