

# AF DC-Nikkor 135mm f/2D



## Specification

Lens construction: 7 elements in 6 groups

Closest focusing: 1.1m / 4 ft.

Filter attachment size: 72mm

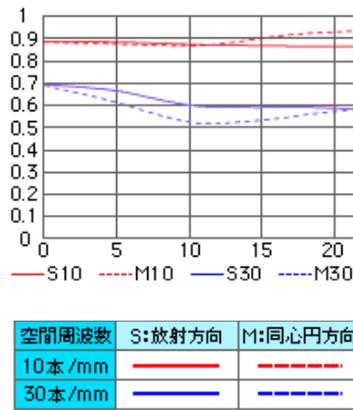
Hood: Built-in

Dimensions: 79 x 120mm

Weight: 815g

- 1 High-performance telephoto with Defocus-Image Control
- 1 Fast telephoto lens featuring Defocus-image Control
- 1 Large maximum aperture allows shooting in dim light
- 1 Rounded diaphragm opening makes out-of-focus elements appear more natural
- 1 RF (Rear Focusing) technology for fast AF operation

MTF Graph



I have never thought of getting this lens...until I come across an auction of the lens...selling by someone I know (whom I am bought a Nikkor AF 24mm f2.8 lens from before). Trying my luck...I give what I think is a good price for me to pay for the lens...then we agree to have a meet up. At the end, due to some minor sign of use and one spot of fungus in the lens...I manage to get it at a price of smile... :-))



I have always want to get a good portrait lens. At first I dream of the 105mm micro, but honestly...it is too sharp to be a good portrait lens. Yup, I have owned this Nikkor AF 105mm f/2.8D micro before, but don't quite like it and have sold it away. Couple it with a soft focus filter? nah...I don't like the soft focus filter soft effect. Too blur... :( Shoot directly? Be prepare to get **BOMBED** by your subject! Though...Nikkor micro lenses are good for children portrait, as their skin is so very soft...so u don't have to worry finding pimples or defect.

My hope to try lens for portrait is the Nikkor AIS 105mm f2.5 (quite cheap in the market, ok...just a note if u are buying this lens. The AIS version comes with a built in hood, the AI version no), as I have heard many praising this lens as the perfect lens for portrait photography. I have



almost bought this lens...but the seller changed his mind during a meet up...err...

Ok, now I have the specialized portrait lens from Nikon...so how is the portrait lens perform? First...I shoot two photos showing the differences between the soft effect created by the 135DC as compare to Nikon Soft 1.

The 135DC lens can create a soft effect by having the Defocus ring set at aperture smaller than the actual aperture of the lens. Eg. Aperture = f2; DF = 5.6



(Nikkor 135DC f2 DF5.6)

Check out the photos on the left. Using Nikon Soft 1, the whole photo is blurred (or so call soft...). By using the soft effect created by the 135DC lens, there is still a sweet spot of sharp focus in the photo. U can see that the **Pooh** in the middle is still having sharp focus in the nose or near the eyes. Also noted at at DC5.6, the front **BEE** the



(Nikkor 135DC f2 DF0 + Nikon Soft 1)

**Pooh** is having more DOF. I can't remember now if I have set the Defocus ring to DC5.6R or DC5.6F...err...I remember is DC5.6R...

<~ Click the photos to view a larger version

More to come later...showing how the DF setting affect the DOF...

(28th July 2003...here they come... ;-)

Setup

Camera: Nikon F60

Film: Fuji Superia 200

Scanner: HP Photosmart S20 (scan direct at 300dpi from prints)

Distance between **Pooh**: 15cm each



Aperture: f/2

Defocus Control: 0

Aperture: f/2



Defocus Control: 2F



Aperture: f/2  
Defocus Control: 2R



Aperture: f/5.6  
Defocus Control: 0



Aperture: f/5.6  
Defocus Control: 2F



Aperture: f/5.6  
Defocus Control: 2R



Aperture: f/4  
Defocus Control: 4R



Aperture: f/8

Defocus Control: 2R

### Using the lens ~ Summary

U might not be able to see the effect of the defocus control very significantly in the photos shown above, but upon comparing the prints side by side, I manage to detect the slightly more blur effect created by the DC.



1. The lens is best used at wide open aperture at f2, where u have the freedom to select DC from 2 ~5.6 without creating soft focus effect.

2. By setting the DC ring to R, u will have the rear (background) of your subject (sharp focused) more blur.

3. By setting the DC ring to F, u will have the front part of your subject (sharp focused) more blur.

4. If u want to create soft focus effect, set the actual aperture of the lens to be smaller than the setting on the DC ring. e.g. Aperture f5.6, DC 2R.



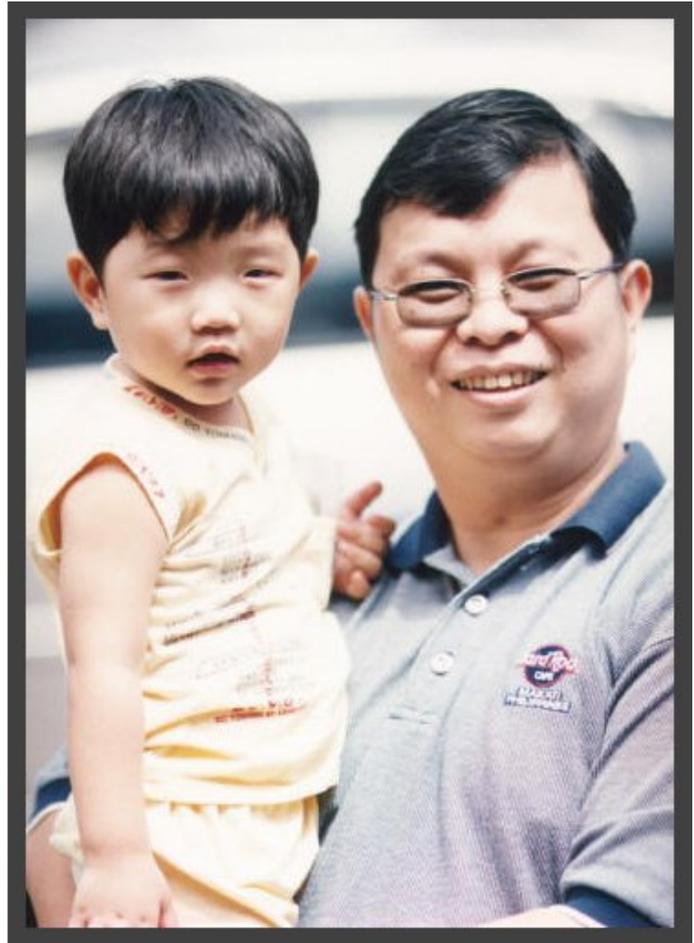
5. The soft focus effect created by the lens is different from using any soft filter, whereby there will still be a pin sharp point in the frame as compare to all soft when using a soft filter. Personally I like this soft effect more.

Here's some of the real life shots:



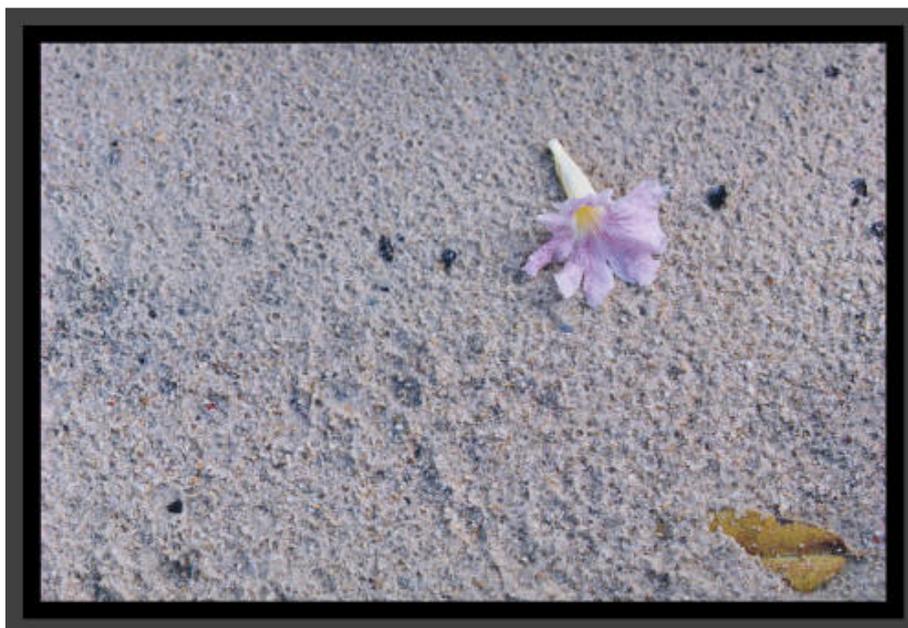
(my church mate's son)

Shot wide open at f2, DC0. Very nice blur at the background, which is why I love to use telephoto lens for portrait, of course the f/2 aperture enhance the blur effect more



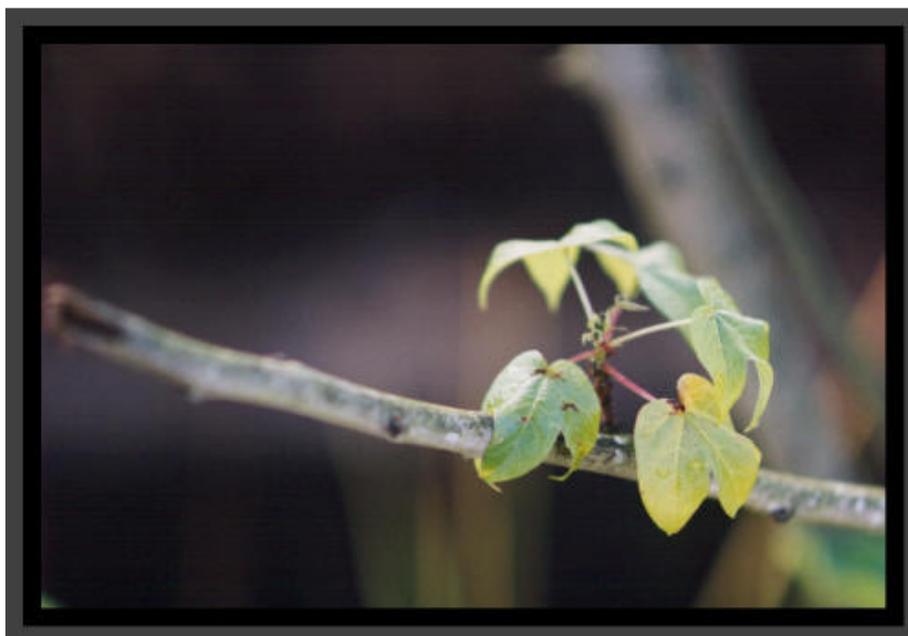
(my church mate ~ [Simon Yong](#))

Shot wide open at f/2, DC2 during noon time. Overexposed as my camera only have 1/2000s max speed. There is a car behind, which is hardly recognizable.



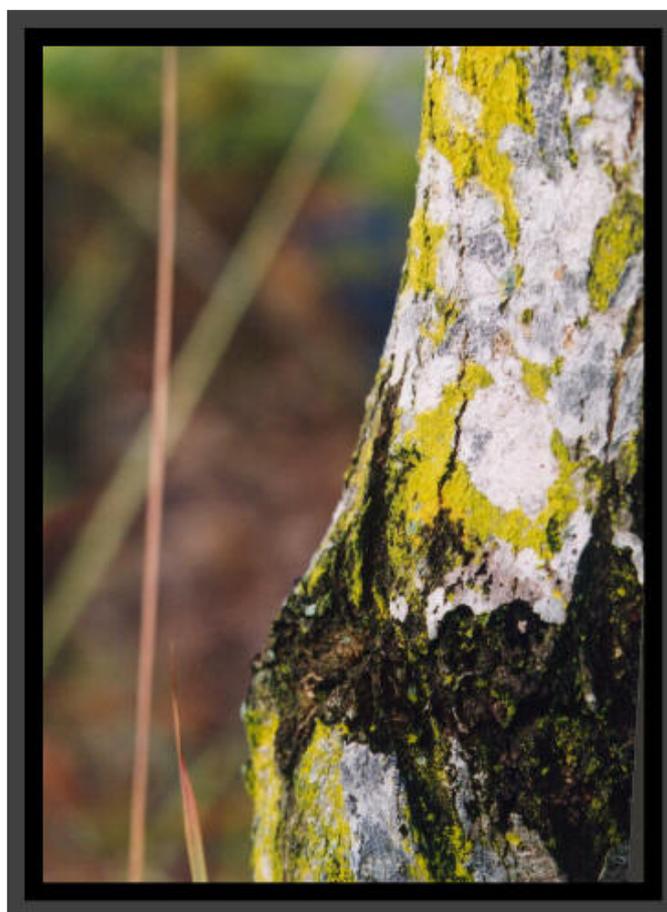
Can't remember the aperture used now. Should be f/8, DC 0

Can't



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too  
exactly  
the  
exposure  
setting.

Should  
be f4, DC  
4  
(due to  
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### **Built**

The built quality of this lens is definitely first class, especially with the metal ring around, make it more stylish or the old style and only found in manual focus Nikkor type. There s a built in hood in this lens, which is made by metal. By extending the

hood and turn anti-clock wise (with the front element facing you), you can actually screw and lock the lens hood to prevent it from sliding back. Turn the other way round to release it.



### Care...

One thing to note about this lens, the rear element is very protrude into the lens, thus cleaning is a nightmare. Never ever try or attempting to clean the rear element yourself, as you will only make it worse (I know...as I did... :-(-). Even blowing the rear element is not a good idea, as there is an **OPENING** (read **HOLE**) at the side **INSIDE** the inner part of the lens, when blowing...u might accidentally blow more dust **INTO** the lens and in between the elements. Another note, the rear element is actually **not a real element**, but just a protection glass to protect the rear part of the lens, just like what Nikon did with their super telephoto: an extra protection glass in the front element with no light correction purpose.



### Worth buying?

This lens is selling new at around **RM3.5k (US\$920+-)**, a very expensive lens in the Nikon lines up for a 135mm focal length. I am just an amateur that earn no money from my hobby, thus it is **"NOT POSSIBLE"** for me to spend this much money for a specialized portrait lens like this. However, since I came across this lens 2nd hand (and at a price I couldn't resist), so I just buy one to play around. The F/2.0 aperture is really fun and ease to use. It really brighten up your viewfinder and give u some extra speed



which might make your picture sharper and useable. I never know that the f/2.0 aperture can be that much different from a f/2.8 aperture until I use it. Every stop (or half stop...or 1/3 stop...) counts when u need it. So...if u are looking for a fast lens and miss your old Nikkor feel (although the original Nikkor AIS is still better built and feel) and have the cash to burn, this is really a fun lens in your Nikon military. Without the Defocus Control, it is still a **sharp, fast and solidly constructed** (read heavy) lens. One warning, the Defocus Control doesn't really do much magic, and most of the time u are better of by just controlling the aperture to give good bokeh than having to depend on the DC. If you set your aperture to f2, the DOF is shallow already, not sure how much the DC can help. U can only use the DC at f2, if smaller, then soft effect. Thus, there is actually nothing much u can play with the DC. I am kind of prefer to use the aperture directly, but if I have to use f2...sure no harm by dialing in DC at another f2 to give more shallow DOF (more blur). Buy the lens as a normal fast f2.0 lens, not for the Defocus Control, and take the DC as a bonus! :-)

~ an experienced photographer suggested that the **Nikkor AF 85mm f/1.4D** lens might be a better buy, faster, brighter and give even better bokeh. I have no experience with this lens, but I am sure f/1.4 is very FUN to use! (and it costs another bomb too! ;-)

In Oct 2004, I sold off this lens at the price of Sing dollar \$850 (RM1850), half the price of what a new one would cost. With DLSR (my Fujifilm S2 Pro), the 135mm focal length has become too long for portrait (202.5mm). Still, my comment on this lens as the best portrait lens will not change, as I believe one day Nikon will come out with a full frame DSLR, then this lens will once again proof to be the best focal length for portrait. Another reason for me not to keep this lens as part of my collection is because of the imperfection of the front element. There is a slight cleaning mark due to previous fungus attack on the front element coating. Though not big (about 1mm round spot at the side) and will definitely not affecting the image quality, but still I don't feel good about it.

In future, I might buy myself another one of this lens again. For the mean time, I have bought myself a manual focus version **Nikkor AiS 135mm f/2**.