BUFFALO BOY (FRANCE/BELGIUM/VIETNAM, 2004)
(Other titles: Gardien de buffles; Mua len trau)

Credits: director/writer, Minh Nguyen-Vo; story, Son Nam.

Cast: Le The Lu, Nguyen Thi Kieu, Trinh, Nguyen Huu Thanh.

Summary: Coming-of-age melodrama set in the Mekong Delta of southern Vietnam around 1940. In a first test of adulthood, 15-year-old Kim (Le The Lu) gets permission from his father to take his family’s two precious water buffalo to high ground to escape the monsoon floods. He loses a buffalo but makes discoveries about himself and his family. Makes fleeting references to French colonial rule when a boatload of armed, uniformed officers comes around to check on tax matters.

Cheng, Scarlet. “Echoes of war, 30 years later; Loss and salvation loom large at the Vietnamese International Film Festival, even for those who live outside their ancestral home” Los Angeles times (Apr 8, 2005), Calendar, p. E18.