

= Kampung Boy ( TV series ) =

Kampung Boy is a Malaysian animated television series first broadcast in 1997 . It is about the adventures of a young boy , Mat , and his life in a kampung ( village ) . The series is adapted from the best @-@ selling graphical novel The Kampung Boy , an autobiography of local cartoonist Lat . Comprising 26 episodes ? one of which won an Annecy Award ? the series was first shown on Malaysian satellite television network Astro before being distributed to 60 other countries such as Canada and Germany .

A main theme of Kampung Boy is the contrast between the traditional rural way of life and the modern urban lifestyle . The series promotes the village lifestyle as an environment that is fun and conducive to the development of a healthy and intelligent child . It raises the issue of modernization , proposing that new values and technologies should be carefully examined by a society before being accepted .

Lat 's animation has won praises for its technical work and refreshing content , although questions have been raised by Southeast Asian audiences over its similarities with Western animation and its deviations from the local style of spoken English . Malaysian animation critics held up Kampung Boy as the standard to which their country 's animators should aspire , and academics in cultural studies regarded the series as a method of using modern technologies and cultural practices to preserve Malaysian history .

= = Origins = =

In 1979 , the autobiographical graphic novel The Kampung Boy was published . The story of a young Malay boy 's childhood in a kampung ( village ) proved to be a commercial and critical success , establishing its author ? Lat ? as the " most renowned cartoonist in Malaysia " . The Kampung Boy 's success prompted Lat to consider using other media to reach out to the masses .

The seeds for the animated adaptation of The Kampung Boy were sown in 1993 in a conversation between Lat and Ananda Krishnan , founder of Measat Broadcast Network Systems . Western and Japanese cartoons flooded the local television channels during the 1990s , and Lat decried those productions for violence and jokes that he considered unsuitable for Malaysia and its youths . Recognising that the younger generation preferred colourful animations over static black and white drawings , Lat was keen for a local animated series to promote local values among Malaysian children . After Krishnan 's company offered Lat financial support to start an animation project , the cartoonist began plans to adapt his trademark comic to the television screen .

= = Production = =

Lat imagined several stories that he wished to see in animated form , and then looked abroad for help producing them . Lacewood Studio in Ottawa , Canada , was in charge of animating the pilot episode . World Sports and Entertainment of Los Angeles was involved as well ; Norman Singer organised the production and Gerald Tripp helped Lat to write the script . Bobdog Production was responsible for animating another five episodes . However , Krishnan and Lat were disappointed with the results , which had taken two years of work to produce . They thought the pilot was " slow @-@ moving " . Lat believed Lacewood had accommodated him too often during the production , accepting his input without question . They failed to inform him that although a slow pace worked for static cartoon drawings , a good animation was often " lively , fast @-@ moving , full of action and fantasy " .

In 1995 , Lat and Krishnan engaged Matinee Entertainment to complete the project , and Lat started to fly back and forth between Kuala Lumpur and Los Angeles to work closely with Matinee 's employees . His experience with Matinee 's team of writers and animators was positive ; they were more proactive than Lacewood 's , brainstorming his ideas and turning them into viable scripts and storyboards . Director Frank Saperstein performed the final edit , polishing up the scripts . Lat , however , had the final say with regards to cultural depictions , overriding several suggestions such

as characters kissing in front of others and the use of Western street slang , as these were unpalatable to the Malaysian public . He also enforced accuracy in the depictions of objects such as bullock carts , noting that the American artists thought Malaysian carts were identical to their Mexican counterparts .

The storyboards were translated into animations by Philippine Animation Studios Incorporated in Manila . Lat again took several trips , this time to the Philippines , to advise the animators and ensure that everything was depicted accurately . Once the animation had been completed , the prints were sent to Vietnam for processing . Finally , the films were delivered to Krishnan 's studio in Kuala Lumpur for voice recording in English and Bahasa Malaysia . Like Lat , Saperstein flew back and forth among the involved countries to coordinate efforts and make sure production standards never dropped . Saperstein 's efforts for his first 12 episodes were enough to convince Lat to continue working with Matinee for the project .

The entire project took four years to complete ; each episode cost approximately 350 @, @ 000 United States dollars ( approximately 1 million Malaysian ringgit ) , partly funded by Measat , and took four to five months to produce . The pilot was shown over TV1 on 10 February 1997 , and the series began its broadcast over Astro Ria two @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half years later . Kinder Channel ( Germany ) and Teletoon ( Canada ) broadcast the series after buying the rights through London @-@ based distributor ITEL , and the series has been broadcast in more than 60 countries since its first airing in Malaysia . Measat expected to recover their investment in approximately 10 years . Although Kampung Boy originated in Malaysia , most of its production took place abroad . It was local in concept , but could be construed as a foreign production in terms of animation . This led to laments that had Malaysian studios been hired to participate in animation work , the country 's industry would have benefited by learning from foreign animation expertise and methodology .

= = Characters = =

The protagonist of the series is a nine @-@ year @-@ old boy named Mat , who typically wears a sarong pelikat and a white singlet . Sporting a broad nose , small eyes , and untidy black hair , the short and rounded boy resembles his creator , Lat , as a child . Mat has a younger sister , Ana , and they live in a house with their father and mother , Yap and Yah , respectively . Their nuclear family structure is predominant in the village . Yap 's mother , Opah , does not live with them but is often seen in their house . Also frequently appearing are Mat 's buddies , Bo and Tak , whose names are components of the Malay word botak ( bald ) . The two are styled after comic characters of traditional wayang kulit ( shadow play ) ; Bo is the more intelligent of the pair , while Tak has a tendency to be a show @-@ off . Other supporting characters include Normah ( a girl formerly from the city ) and Mrs Hew ( Mat 's teacher ) .

The Malay and English voices of the characters were dubbed by Malaysian voice actors . Child actors were employed for the younger roles ; however , Mat , Ana , Bo , and Tak were voiced by actors who were in their early twenties . Certain actors had the task of voicing multiple roles ; for example , the voice director was responsible for speaking the roles of Mrs Hew and Yah . Initially , voice talents were hired in Los Angeles to dub the English version , but they " kept slipping into a Jamaican accent " . Although this soundtrack was not used in the series , the producers felt it was too funny to waste and included it in The Making of Kampung Boy , which was broadcast a week before the start of the series .

= = Setting = =

Whereas Kampung Boy the comic book was based on life in the 1950s , its animation spin @-@ off was set in the 1990s . Although the scenery and details are exaggerated , the animation is accurate in its depiction of the Malaysian village and the life of its inhabitants . Dr Rohani Hashim , of Universiti Sains Malaysia 's School of Communication , called the series a " detailed recreation of a rural Malay childhood " . The layout of Mat 's village and the style of its houses are patterned after those in the rural areas of Perak , Malaysia ? clusters of houses line a river , which provides water

for the villagers ' needs . The children play in the surrounding jungle , while the adults toil in the fields and commute to the city to work .

Saperstein directed the use of warm and soft colours in the series ; this colour scheme was modelled after that of Winnie the Pooh , bestowing a " soft , cuddly feel " , according to Far Eastern Economic Review journalist S. Jayasankaran , to the animation . Much of the show 's visuals followed Lat 's art style . Outlines are drawn in bold manner , making objects stand out from the background ? an effect particularly aided by the rich use of brown , green , and yellow as the primary colours . The last two colours are heavily used in the depictions of nature , contrasting well with each other and separating the background from the middle ground . Aside from being the main colour for the houses , brown is used as the skin tone of the characters . Drawn with " short and round shapes " , Mat and his fellow Malays are highlighted with bright colours .

= = Themes and hallmarks = =

Kampung Boy 's episodes follow a structure reminiscent of Hollywood cartoons . Each episode contains two separate stories whose themes interweave each other as the show switches between scenes of the two stories . By the end of the episode , the two threads are resolved by a common idea . Generally , one story focuses on the kampung children , and the other on the adults . The creators of Kampung Boy refrained from copying ideas commonly found in Western and Japanese cartoons . Other Malaysian animations produced since the 1990s have not been as meticulously faithful to portraying images and themes familiar to the locals ? for example , Sang Wira 's ( 1996 ) protagonist bears a striking resemblance to Doraemon , and the bear and bee in Ngat dan Taboh ( 2002 ) play out antics similar to those of Tom and Jerry . Lat 's close involvement with the project kept its portrayals faithful to Malaysian culture . Kampung life in the animation features " true @-@ blue Malaysian elements " such as supernatural superstitions ( pontianaks or female vampires ) , monkeys trained to pluck coconuts , and traditions that are forgotten in the transition from rural to urban living .

The cartoon series explores ideas through the activities of the characters , especially their interactions with one another . Rohani classified the genre of the show as comedy drama . According to her , the main theme in Kampung Boy is nostalgia , carrying Lat 's intention to portray rural childhood as a " much more interesting and creative " experience than growing up in an urban environment . Several episodes champion the kampung way of life . In " Orang Bandar Datang " ( " The City People Come to the Kampung " ) , Mat and his friends defeat a city football ( soccer ) team because of their toughness bred from doing hard work in the village . " SiMat Manusia Pintar " ( " Smart Like a Flying Fox " ) suggests that the unpolluted environment of the kampung promotes the upbringing of a healthier and more intelligent child . Normah arrives from the city in " Mat Main Wayang " ( " The Shadow Knows " ) , and although she disdains the kampung initially , she is won over by the villagers ' tenderness toward her .

The intrusion of modern technology and attitudes into this idyllic kampung way of life is also a main topic in the series . Several episodes introduce electrical appliances and ideas associated with urban lifestyles to the villagers . For example , the convenience of motor cars versus the traditional use of bullock carts is debated by the characters in " Naik Keretaku " ( " Dad 's Driving Test " ) . Despite the show 's support of the kampung lifestyle , it portrays aspects of modern living in a positive light as well . Opah , an old woman , is depicted as a capable modern woman , proficient in driving a van and fixing televisions . The city is characterized as a gateway to a range of cultures and ideas that are not found in a Malaysian rural village , as illustrated in the encounter and formation of a friendship between Mat and a Chinese boy in " Naik Keretaku " .

The series also explores changes in Malaysian rural society that had taken place during the 1950s to 1990s . For example , through flashbacks , " Yah , Kahwinkan Kami ! " ( " Gone With Kahwin " ) displays traditional marriage customs that are no longer practiced by urban dwellers . Family ties are shown to be strong in the rural community ? family members show close attention and concern to one another . Conversely , those who immersed themselves in city life are depicted to have lost their communal bonds . Although Mat 's family is depicted to follow the rules of the Malay patriarchal

society , modern values are in its portrayal . Yap does not leave the responsibilities of child @-@ rearing all to Yah ; he takes care of Ana while she watches over Mat . Although the series presents the female characters as housewives , it makes the point in " Nasib Si Gadis Desa " ( " It 's a Girl 's Life " ) that the traditional family role of the Malay woman is as equal and valuable as the man 's . The episode also mentions the achievements of women in careers such as space exploration and science .

Overall , Rohani said that Lat 's cartoon series was subtly recording a story of " rapidly vanishing Malay tradition and innocence " , while advising viewers to consider the societal changes around them . According to her , the cartoonist 's concern was to inspire the audience to consider the pace of urbanisation and to realise that the adoption or rejection of new values is a common decision by them . The show , in her opinion , suggests that changes should be carefully examined and adopted only if beneficial to the society . Furthermore , the adoption of new ideas and culture should be a gradual process , and the changes tailored accordingly to the society .

= = Reception , legacy , and achievements = =

Kampung Boy was submitted to the 1999 Annecy International Animated Film Festival in France . One of its episodes , " Oh , Tok ! " , won the Best Animation for a television series of 13 minutes and more . The episode was about a spooky banyan tree that became the object of Mat 's fear . Because of the local contents in the animation and the nostalgic appeal of the kampung lifestyle , Malaysian comics scholar Mulyadi Mahamood expected success for Kampung Boy in his country .

The 26 @-@ episode series was popular with the young and received positive reviews for technical details and content . It has also attracted criticism for similarities to United States cartoon series The Simpsons ; audiences noticed that Mat 's Malaysian family was similar in several ways to Bart Simpson 's dysfunctional American family . Similarly , some critics pointed out that the English spoken in Kampung Boy is substantially different from Malaysian English , which is heavily influenced by British English ; reporter Daryl Goh perceived an American accent to the English @-@ language voices . Lat explained that the producers had to tone down the use of " traditional Malay customs , locales and language " to market the series to a wider global audience . Rohani found the decision " regrettable " ; it made the animation less than an authentic Malay product .

The animation was regarded by Dr Paulette Dellios , of Bond University 's School of Humanities and Social Sciences , as a cultural artefact : a reminder and preservation of a country 's old way of life , created and produced by an international team , and displayed via modern technologies to the world . According to Rohani , Kampung Boy was a record of Malay traditions and transitions experienced by the rural community during the 1950s to 1990s . Among the several Malaysian animations that used local settings , Lat 's series was in veteran film director Hassan Abdul Muthalib 's view the best in portraying the country 's culture and traditions ; Hassan also said that the success in marketing the series overseas made Kampung Boy the benchmark for Malaysia 's animation industry .