

Enrich experience of visitors to Chinatown KL

LETTERS

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IN 2001, Petaling Street in Kuala Lumpur underwent a major facelift, with two Chinese-style arches built at the road's entrance and exit. Blue polycarbonate roofing was installed along the street to provide shelter from the sun and rain.

After more than 20 years, the roofs and awnings have succumbed to the elements, resulting in water leakage during heavy downpours. Certain stretches of the street are also prone to flooding, posing challenges for traders and visitors.

Kuala Lumpur City Hall will soon be undertaking another major overhaul of Petaling Street by introducing 100 new stall lots in front of existing ones. However, this has been strongly objected by more than 600 traders, pointing out that there are already 773 stalls in Petaling Street.

Here are my thoughts to enrich the experience of visiting Chinatown KL, aiming to make it more unique and rewarding compared with the typical route where many visitors simply enter at the junction of Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock and exit at Jalan Sultan.

What they see are predominantly stalls operated by foreigners selling counterfeit goods, a common sight in many street markets around the world.

Consequently, visitors often miss out on experiencing the authentic essence of Chinatown. Instead,



Chinatown should not be defined by only the stalls. It should include attractions in the surrounding area. —ADIB RAWI YAHYA/THESUN

Petaling Street resembles more of a "Bangla town".

For too long, Petaling Street has been wrongly equated to Chinatown, similar to the common misconception of referring to the Petronas Twin Towers as KLCC (Kuala Lumpur City Centre), which encompasses the entire area.

Likewise, Chinatown is not limited to Petaling Street and should include the broader area bordered by Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock, Jalan Hang Kasturi and Jalan Sultan.

Within this area lies streets such as Jalan Tun H.S. Lee, Lorong Bandar and Jalan Hang Lekir, alongside many other lanes waiting to be explored.

Beyond its borders, leading towards Bulatan Merdeka, is the Chan She Shu Yuen Clan Ancestral Hall, resembling an ancient temple, and there are many popular hipster cafes dotted along Jalan Balai Polis and Lorong Panggung, including Kwai Chai Hong or Ghost Lane.

Therefore, Chinatown should not

be defined by only the makeshift stalls. It should include attractions in the surrounding area while greater focus should be placed on traditional businesses operating from shophouses.

Sadly, many visitors overlook or are unaware that there are shops behind the roadside stalls, and they are the true representatives of Chinatown, catering to the locals for decades by offering authentic products, instead of counterfeit goods.

A such, all five-foot ways should be clear and convenient to use. Illegal partitions erected between shops should be removed so pedestrians are not forced to walk on the roadside, which may expose them to the sun or rain, traffic accidents or snatch thefts.

Large street maps showing the whole of Chinatown should be displayed at vantage points indicating to visitors where they are and what is available to ensure visitors and businesses get the best possible experiences and sales opportunities, respectively.

Since 2018, the Kuala Lumpur Hawkers and Petty Traders Association have been requesting an upgrade of Petaling Street facilities.

I hope my concerns will be included to make KL Chinatown a unique and memorable experience.

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