

Facelift can bring out the best in Petaling Street Chinatown

MORE than two decades ago, Petaling Street in Kuala Lumpur, also known as Chinatown, underwent a facelift with two Chinese-style arches built at the beginning and end of the road.

Blue polycarbonate roofing was installed to provide shelter from the sun and rain.

Since then, the elements have taken a toll on the roof and awnings, with water leaking down during downpours. Also, certain stretches of the street are prone to flooding, inconveniencing traders and visitors.

Mercifully, City Hall will soon give Petaling Street another facelift, with plans to add another 100 stalls in front of existing ones.

However, this was objected to by more than 600 traders as there were already 773 stalls.

I wish to offer my two sen worth to make visiting Chinatown a more unique experience.

Many visitors just walk from the entrance at the junction of Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock and exit at the other end at Jalan Sultan.

What they see are mostly stalls selling fake goods. So foreigners do not get a feel of Chinatown here.

For too long, Petaling Street has been wrongly equated with Chinatown, just like many referring to the Petronas Twin Towers as KLCC (Kuala Lumpur City Centre).

Likewise, Chinatown is not lim-



The shops behind the Petaling Street stalls are the true representation of Chinatown. FILE PIC

ited to Petaling Street and should include the big rectangular area bordered by Jalan Tun Tan Cheng Lock, Jalan Hang Kasturi and Jalan Sultan.

Inside this area are Jalan Tun H.S. Lee, Lorong Bandar, Jalan Hang Lekir and many lanes.

Just outside this zone on Petaling Street leading to Bulatan Merdeka is the Chan She Shu Yuen Clan Ancestral Hall.

There are many cafes on Jalan Balai Polis and Lorong Panggung, including Kwai Chai Hong or Ghost

Lane.

So Chinatown should not be defined by stalls on Petaling Street. More focus should be placed on traditional businesses operating from shophouses.

The shops behind the stalls are the true representation of Chinatown, catering to the demands of local customers for decades by offering authentic products, instead of counterfeit goods.

All the five-foot ways must be cleared. Illegal partitions built in

between shops should be removed so that pedestrians are not forced to walk on the roadside.

Large street maps showing the whole of Chinatown as described earlier should be on display at vantage points, indicating to visitors where they are and what is available.

This would ensure visitors and businesses get the best possible experiences and sales opportunities.

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