

## **Immersive Ethnography and Digital Preservation of Buddhist Street Names: A Case Study of Jalan Berhala, Malaysia**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Local history is reflected in street names. Street names are one factor that is frequently disregarded when measuring cultural indicators. This is because street names can serve as an additional source of localised religiously-based cultural data. Numerous streets in Malaysia bear names or teachings from Buddhism. This research attempts to archive the origins and history of the roads bearing Buddhist names to preserve national identity and cultural heritage- particularly Buddhism in the local context. Using both contemporary spatial practices and historical local narratives, this research also aims to establish a connection between historical land use and the present. Documenting the origins of these streets through narratives by settlers and prominent figures of authority would shed light on the cultural significance of Buddhism of the people and its territory. Narratives will be documented in the form of 360° videos with supporting visuals of prominent Buddhist landmarks along the street. The methodology will adopt an ethnographic approach through digital archiving which is the emerging trend in new media research). The study site was conducted in Jalan Berhala, Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur Malaysia and it hopes to increase audience motivation and awareness of Buddhism culture through the benefits of new media technology. The outcome of this research highlights a rich blend of cultural experiences emerging through narratives from residents and prominent heads of religion. Unity*

*and religious harmony through participation of Wesak Day parade was significant to Jalan Berhala. This also suggests that digital humanities can play a crucial role in bridging the gap between traditional cultural practices and contemporary technological engagement.*

**Keywords :** *Jalan Berhala, Street Narratives, Malaysia Buddhism, Cultural Preservation, Technology Integration*

## **Introduction**

An urban feature that is often overlooked are street names (Bancilhon et.al., 2021). With an increase in population in coming years, new methods of managing and documenting urbanization while preserving cultural heritage are important to reflect on the past through digitization while moving forward into the future (Michel, et.al., 2011). According to Cohen and Kliot (1992), street names are linked to power where governments strategize to utilize these names to promote specific historic events. This is similarly supported by Guyot, et.al. (2007) and Azaryarhu (1996) who state that street naming is very much associated with administrative control of the particular locale. Extensive research has been done on street naming linking its people to the locale (Shoval, 2013) for the purpose of profit and prestige. Street names mirror local history (David, 2013). One aspect that is often overlooked when quantifying cultural indicators is street names (Bancilhon, et.al., 2021) which is also an alternative source for cultural data from a religious standpoint at a local level. In Malaysia, several streets were named in honor of Buddhist teachings or names such as Jalan Berhala, Brickfields; Jalan Tokong, Malacca; Jalan Gunaratana and Jalan Nirvana, Penang to name a few. According to Ghani (2016), the names of a locality often reflect upon the cultural heritage that is worth preserving for the purpose of national identity. These includes names derived from local legends, warriors, folklore, historical events, celebrities, and dignitaries (Ghani, 2016).



Buddhism has a long and rich history in Malaysia, dating back to the 3rd century when early traders and seafarers from India and China brought the religion to the region. Over time, Buddhism became one of the dominant religions in Malaysia and has become deeply ingrained in the country's culture and society. According to Malaysia's Census 2010, 19.8 percent of Malaysian population embraced Buddhism (DOSM, 2010) and that set Buddhism as the second largest religion in Malaysia after Islam (61.3 percent). Malaysia is home to over 700 registered Buddhist organizations with offer religious education to Buddhist followers and actively engaged in social and welfare work. Buddhist societies are commonly found in educational institutions such as universities, colleges, and schools. Among the active youth movement on Buddhism is the Young Buddhist Association of Malaysia. (Ang, 2005)

**Carta 12: Taburan peratus penduduk mengikut agama, Malaysia, 2010**  
*Chart 12: Percentage distribution of the population by religion, Malaysia, 2010*

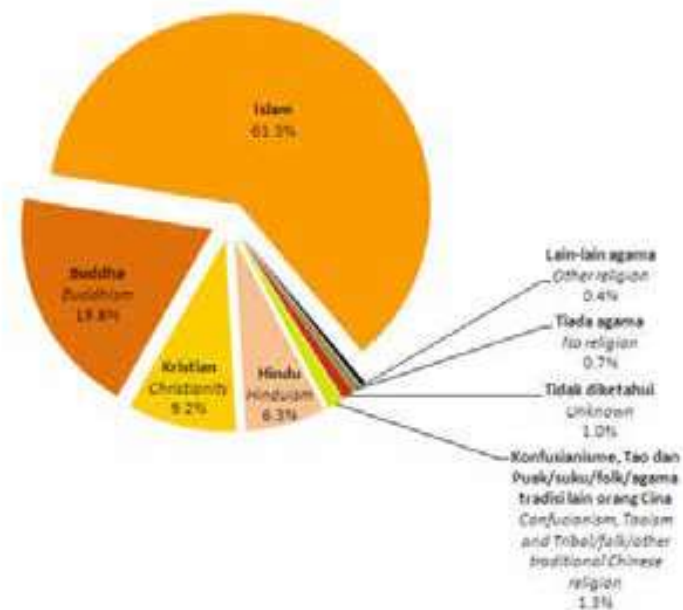


Figure 1.1: Breakdown of Malaysian According to Religion in 2010

The tradition of Buddhist temples serving as both religious and cultural centres dates back many years. In the past, these temples served as primary centres of education before the establishment of secular schools and colleges. For the lay Buddhists, the temple is a place for worship and making offerings (Liow, 2005). The Buddhist Maha Vihara in Kuala Lumpur's Brickfields neighbourhood, established in 1894 as the Brickfields Buddhist Temple, is a significant example of this. The temple hosts the Buddhist Institute Sunday Dharma School, offering weekly religious classes for Buddhist students, as well as leadership and personal development programs. An annual novice monk training program is also held at the temple. The Buddhist Missionary Society (BMS), located within the temple's premises, is known for its publications such as "*Voice of Buddhism*" and various booklets (Ang, 2005).

The research will be centered on a little area called Jalan Berhala in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur. Brickfields, being listed as part of the cultural heritage site under the Kuala Lumpur City plan 2020 has long undergone urbanization where the government has plans to improve its image giving tourism to the city a boost (Saiful Hazmi Bachek, 2014). Despite the area being safeguarded as a heritage zone, rapid development has led to the deterioration of the original characteristics of the area. Brickfields was named following a major fire in Kuala Lumpur in 1881, which led British Resident Frank Swettenham to initiate the rebuilding of the area using bricks (Deol, 2014). Known for its diverse religious structures are the Vivekenanda Ashram, the Buddhist Maha Vihara, the Holy Rosary Church, Sri Kandaswamy Temple and Our Lady of Fatima Church which are among the most notable landmarks that stands today in Brickfields.

At present, a review of the literature showed little evidence of street archiving particularly on streets with religious connotation in Malaysia from an academic standpoint. Though there were write-ups on the Internet on streets with Buddhist names in Malaysia, these were presented in a non-academic approach. Therefore, this research aims to archive the origins and historical significance of street names with Buddhist meanings using 360° video technology from an anthropological perspective, with the goal of raising awareness about the cultural relevance of Buddhism in the local context and its role in preserving national identity and heritage.

This research also hopes to link historical land use to the present day through local narratives from the past and spatial practices of today. Documenting the origins of these streets through narratives by settlers and prominent figures of authority would shed light on the cultural significance of Buddhism of the people and its territory.

## **Literature Review**

### **Buddhism Awareness and the impact of this research to the society**

Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism are regarded as the “three pillars” of ancient Chinese society. These philosophies and religions not only shaped spirituality but also influenced governments, science, the arts, and social structure. Despite their differing beliefs and occasional conflicts, they often overlapped and coexisted, enriching and blending with each other over time. Understanding the unique interplay between these three traditions offers profound insights into both ancient and modern Chinese society. Buddhism, a philosophy centred on personal development and the attainment of deep knowledge,

emphasizes achieving enlightenment through meditation, spiritual learning, and disciplined practice. The Buddha's teachings promote non-violence and peace, emphasizing core values such as friendship (*maitri*), compassion (*karuna*), sympathetic joy (*mudita*), and societal welfare. The principles of Right Livelihood, Right Speech, and Right Mindfulness in Buddhism advocate for a harmonious society that causes no harm to others or the environment. The theme of this research, 溯流穷源, 弘扬佛法, focuses on tracing and documenting the origins and history of roads with Buddhist names to honour Buddhist teachings. By promoting awareness of Buddhism and its cultural heritage in the local community using new technology, this research aims to reach younger audiences through social media and attract cultural tourism through local narratives from the streets.

### **Cultural Preservation**

Culture preservation can be summarized as the practice or effort to maintain certain characteristics, identities or knowledge of a particular community or group of people (Pappas and McKelvie, 2022). From that definition alone, it can be interpreted that preserving culture is a very important duty for any type of community, whether it be an endangered indigenous tribe or even citizens of a first-class country. For generations, cultural heritage, which is the practice of inheriting traditions ranging from historical stories, social practices, living values, locations and even sacred objects of a community, has been continuously carried out by groups of people from all over the world so that their presence would not be forgotten (Chiong, 2022). On the surface, cultural preservation is deemed important as it represents the identity of a community, their footprint of existence in this world. However, there is much more depth to why this practice is essential and should be considered by all parties to participate and contribute in.

Preserving culture is necessary for several reasons. Primarily, it affirm the identity of a community across generations. Being proud of one's background or uniqueness is part of being human. One's culture is special and irreplaceable, it's a collection of intangible and tangible heritage that forms incredible stories of the past. By preserving culture, we uphold the integrity of a community as it reminds us of our roots and how far we have made as a society or nation. It can serve as a motivator as it reminds future generations of the hard work, achievements, and successes of their ancestors, thus driving us in the same victorious direction. Not only that, it can also serve as a guide to further success.

Other than that, cultural preservation is also essential for the age-old knowledge and wisdom to be passed down from generation to generation. Culture includes social practices and living habits of our ancestors and how they dealt with issues of the past. According to Chiong (2022), each culture possesses its own philosophical ideas, viewpoints, and approaches to solving problems, all of which contribute to broadening our thinking as a community and as individuals. The knowledge passed down within a community may be beneficial for local problems where its solution does not apply to other locations, or where its solution can even help other communities located elsewhere with similar issues.

There have been numerous times where cultural knowledge has helped future generations deal with problems. One ideal example is how the locals on Simeulue Island in Indonesia dealt with an upcoming Tsunami back in December 2004. This tsunami was known to have killed more than 200,000 lives, mainly in Aceh, Indonesia. However, Simeuleu's locals attracted global attention because, despite the fact that the majority of the population had lived on the beach that was drowned in

the tsunami, only seven of the island's 78,128 residents perished in the tragedy. This was all thanks to the cultural knowledge passed down to the islanders through folklores and local songs titled 'Smong', meaning tsunami in the Devayan Language (Pasotti, 2018). The knowledge passed down reminded the islanders that earthquakes and rapidly receding sea levels served as alerts to flee to higher ground. This traditional tale stems from a similar tsunami back in 1907, which prompted the few survivors of Simeulue island to pass down the story of their experience to their descendants. This proved to be life-saving as nearly 100 years later, the 70 thousand residents of Simeulue island were reminded of the 'Smong' folklore and quickly ran up to the hills before the tsunami could reach them (Rahman, 2018). Through this eye-opening incident, we can see how the wisdom passed down even from hundreds of years ago may be the reason that saves thousands of lives.

Cultural heritage preservation is a critical aspect of tourism, as it helps to preserve the unique and diverse cultural traditions, customs, and history of a destination for both current and future generations. Without the preservation of cultural heritage, tourists would not have the opportunity to experience and learn about the unique culture and history of a destination, and the local community would lose an important part of their identity. One of the main reasons cultural heritage preservation is important for tourism is because it helps to attract tourists to a destination. Tourists are often drawn to destinations that offer unique cultural experiences and the opportunity to learn about different traditions and customs. By preserving cultural heritage, destinations can offer tourists a rich and authentic cultural experience, which can be a major factor in their decision to visit (Silvestrelli, 2013; Kumar; 2017).

In addition to attracting tourists, the preservation of cultural heritage can also have a positive economic impact on a destination. The tourism industry is a major



contributor to the economy of many countries, and the preservation of cultural heritage can help to generate income and create jobs in the tourism sector. For example, the preservation of historical landmarks and buildings can lead to the development of cultural tourism, which involves the promotion and marketing of cultural attractions to tourists. This can lead to the development of new tourism-related businesses, such as restaurants, hotels, and tour companies, which can provide economic benefits to the local community (Van 2020, Bitušíková 2021). Furthermore, the preservation of cultural heritage can also help to foster a sense of pride and identity within the local community. By preserving the cultural traditions and customs of a community, the local people can continue to pass on their cultural heritage to future generations and keep their traditions alive. This can help to strengthen the cultural identity of the community and provide a sense of belonging for its members (Timothy, 2014; Van, 2020; Ribeiro, 2011).

The preservation of cultural heritage is important for tourism for a variety of reasons. It helps to attract tourists to a destination, economically impact on the local community, and foster a sense of pride and identity within the community. It is essential that destinations take active steps to preserve their cultural heritage to ensure that future generations have the opportunity to experience and learn about the unique culture and history of a destination. There are several effective ways to preserve cultural heritage. One of the most effective ways to preserve cultural heritage is through education and awareness campaigns. By educating the public about the importance of cultural heritage and the need to protect it, people can become more conscious of the role they play in preserving cultural traditions and customs. Governments also play a role in preserving cultural heritage by enacting laws and regulations to protect historical landmarks and cultural sites. This can help to ensure that cultural heritage is

preserved for future generations. Another effective way to preserve cultural heritage is through the conservation and restoration of historical landmarks, buildings, and artifacts. This can involve measures such as stabilizing and repairing structures, as well as implementing measures to protect against natural disasters and the effects of weather. Digital preservation: Technology can also be used to preserve cultural heritage, through the use of digital tools such as databases, online archives, and virtual reality experiences. This can help to make cultural heritage more accessible to the public and ensure that it is preserved for future generations. Community involvement: Involving the local community in the preservation of cultural heritage can be an effective way to ensure that it is protected. By engaging with the community and involving them in the process of preserving cultural heritage, it can help to build a sense of ownership and responsibility for the preservation of cultural traditions and customs.

Heritage preservation is the act of protecting and conserving cultural and historical sites, buildings, and artifacts for future generations. However, there are many obstacles that can hinder these efforts. One major obstacle is limited resources. Many heritage sites and cultural artifacts are in need of repair or restoration, but funding and resources to preserve them may be scarce. This can make it difficult to properly care for and maintain these sites, leading to their deterioration over time. Another obstacle is disinterest or lack of awareness. Some people may not see the value in preserving heritage sites and may not support efforts to do so. This lack of support can make it difficult to secure funding and resources for preservation projects (Barriocanal, 2008; Al-Ababneh, 2020).

Natural disasters and climate change can also pose a threat to heritage preservation. Heritage sites and cultural artifacts can be damaged or destroyed by earthquakes,

hurricanes, and floods, and climate change can contribute to the deterioration of these sites. In addition, development and urbanization present growing risk. As cities grow and develop, heritage sites are often threatened by development projects. These projects can lead to the destruction of historical buildings and artifacts to make way for new construction. Political and social conflict can also pose a threat to heritage preservation. Heritage sites and cultural artifacts can be caught in the crossfire of political and social conflict, leading to their destruction or damage. In some cases, heritage sites may be intentionally targeted for destruction as a way to erase a particular culture or history.

Illicit trade and looting can also be a problem for heritage preservation. Some heritage sites and cultural artifacts may be stolen or looted for their historical or financial value, leading to their loss or destruction. This can be particularly difficult to prevent, as these illegal activities are often carried out in secret. Poor management and conservation is another obstacle to heritage preservation. Without proper management and conservation, heritage sites and cultural artifacts can deteriorate or be lost due to neglect. This can be due to a lack of trained professionals, such as archaeologists and conservators, who are skilled in preserving heritage sites and cultural artifacts.

In conclusion, heritage preservation is essential for preserving the cultural and historical heritage of a place or group of people. However, there are many obstacles that can hinder these efforts, including limited resources, disinterest or lack of awareness, natural disasters and climate change, development and urbanization, political and social conflict, illicit trade and looting, and poor management and conservation. It is important to address these obstacles in order to ensure the successful preservation of our cultural and historical heritage for future generations (Van, 2020; Adie, 2020; Perić, 2021; Timothy, 2014).

UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) is an international organization that works to protect and promote cultural and natural heritage around the world. UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization) is an international organization that promotes cultural and natural heritage around the world. One way that UNESCO promotes heritage tourism is by designating certain sites as World Heritage Sites. These sites are selected based on their cultural, historical, or natural significance, and are recognized as being of outstanding universal value to humanity.

There are currently over 1,000 World Heritage Sites in the world, including iconic landmarks like the Great Wall of China, the Pyramids of Giza, and the Taj Mahal. These sites attract millions of visitors each year, generating significant income for local communities and contributing to the development of sustainable tourism. In addition to designating World Heritage Sites, UNESCO also provides technical assistance and funding for the preservation and management of these sites. This includes training local professionals in conservation techniques, developing management plans, and promoting sustainable tourism practices. UNESCO also supports the development of heritage tourism through education and awareness campaigns. These campaigns aim to educate the public about the importance of heritage sites and the need to protect and conserve them for future generations. Overall, UNESCO plays a vital role in promoting heritage tourism by recognizing and supporting the world's most significant cultural and natural sites. By attracting visitors and providing support for their preservation, UNESCO helps to ensure that these sites are valued and protected for future generations (Timothy, 2014; Van, 2020).

UNESCO's World Heritage Centre is responsible for implementing the World Heritage Convention, which aims to protect and preserve cultural and natural heritage sites that are considered to be of outstanding universal value.

One way that UNESCO does this is through funding opportunities for heritage preservation projects. UNESCO offers a range of funding opportunities for heritage projects, including grants, loans, and partnerships with other organizations. These funding opportunities are designed to support the preservation and management of cultural and natural heritage sites, as well as the promotion of cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue. One example of a UNESCO funding opportunity is the World Heritage Fund, which provides financial assistance to World Heritage Sites in need of conservation or restoration. The fund also supports the development of management plans, the training of local professionals, and the promotion of sustainable tourism at these sites (UNESCO).

Another example is the Intangible Cultural Heritage Fund, which supports the preservation of intangible cultural heritage, such as traditional crafts, music, and dance. This fund provides grants to help communities preserve and promote their intangible cultural heritage, as well as to support the development of education and awareness campaigns. In addition to these specific funding opportunities, UNESCO also offers a range of other funding options, including emergency assistance for heritage sites threatened by conflict or natural disasters, and grants for research and capacity-building projects.

The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the tourism industry, leading to a need for research and innovation in order to adapt to emerging challenges and opportunities. The COVID-19 pandemic has the potential to transform the tourism industry for social and

ecological justice and led to a turning of the tourism sectors towards their host communities. These changes provide an opportunity to rethink and reset tourism towards a better pathway for the future. The pandemic has changed the world forever and has heavily impacted the international travel, tourism demand, and hospitality sector. In order to adapt to these changes, it may be necessary to adopt new technologies, such as augmented reality (AR), which has the potential to support the relaunch of the tourism sector post-COVID-19 in accordance with guidelines set out by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) (Chang 2020). AR can be used to create unique, personalized, and context-specific experiences for tourists, as well as to ensure their safety and assist with the management and development of AR-driven tourism.

In addition to AR, the pandemic has led to a need for research in various areas related to its impact on tourism. Economic and social impacts, such as the scale of immediate economic impacts and the myth of “catch up development” and “perpetual growth,” are important areas of research. The pandemic also presents an opportunity for degrowth and a reset of economic and social systems. This could involve taking an approach to tourism, which emphasizes local, small-scale, and community-based tourism, as well as slow tourism and degrowth.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also had an impact on cultural heritage and preservation efforts (Merciu 2022, Pavlova 2020). The pandemic has had a negative impact on the conservation and capitalization of cultural heritage, but has also created opportunities for the introduction of ICT innovations in museums and other cultural institutions, and many museums have tried to enhance their digital activities during the pandemic (Pavlova, 2020). At the same



time, the pandemic has had a significant negative impact on the activities of cultural heritage tourism sites in Europe (Naramski, 2022).

Overall, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a complex and multifaceted impact on the tourism industry, cultural preservation, and the management of historical monuments. Adapting to these challenges, it will be necessary to find new ways of working, including the use of technologies like AR, as well as to rethink and reset tourism and cultural preservation for the future. It is clear that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the tourism industry and cultural preservation efforts. As the pandemic continues to evolve, it is essential that research is conducted in order to identify the best ways to adapt to the challenges and opportunities presented by the pandemic. This may involve the adoption of new technologies, such as augmented reality, as well as a shift towards more local, small-scale, and community-based tourism models. It will also be necessary to find ways to mitigate the negative impact of the pandemic on cultural heritage and preservation efforts, such as by enhancing digital activities and finding alternative ways of conserving and capitalizing on cultural heritage. By conducting research and adapting to the changing landscape, it will be possible to navigate the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure the long-term viability of the tourism industry and cultural preservation efforts.

Local authorities and government agencies play a crucial role in heritage preservation and tourism promotion. These organizations are responsible for the protection and management of cultural and natural heritage sites within their jurisdiction, as well as for promoting these sites as tourist destinations. One of the main roles of local authorities and government agencies in heritage preservation is the development and implementation of conservation and

management plans. These plans outline the steps needed to preserve and protect heritage sites, including measures to prevent deterioration, address any immediate threats, and promote sustainable tourism. Local authorities and government agencies are also responsible for enforcing laws and regulations related to heritage preservation, such as building codes and land use planning.

In addition to their role in heritage preservation, local authorities and government agencies also play a key role in tourism promotion. They may work with tourism boards and other organizations to develop marketing campaigns and promotional materials to attract visitors to heritage sites. They may also provide support for the development of infrastructure, such as visitor centers and facilities, to enhance the visitor experience.

Overall, the role of local authorities and government agencies in heritage preservation and tourism promotion is vital for the protection and promotion of cultural and natural heritage. By working to preserve and promote these sites, these organizations help to ensure that heritage is valued and appreciated by current and future generations.

## **Buddhism in Malaysia**

Buddhism is one of the major religions in Malaysia, along with Islam, Hinduism, and Christianity. It is practiced by a significant minority of the population, especially among ethnic Chinese and ethnic Indian communities. (Tan, 2022). It is believed that Buddhism first arrived in Malaysia around the 3rd century AD, brought by Indian traders and merchants who were traveling along the maritime trade routes that connected Southeast Asia with India and China. These early traders and merchants likely introduced the religion to the local populations along the coast, and over time, it began to spread and take root in various parts of

the country. Additionally, during the 7th century, the Sri Vijayan Empire which controlled the Malay Peninsula and Sumatra also spread Buddhism. (Chia, 2022) Furthermore, during the 14th century, Buddhism in Malaysia was also strongly influenced by the arrival of Chinese traders and immigrants, who brought with them their own form of Buddhism, known as Mahayana Buddhism, which further strengthened the presence of Buddhism in the region.

The Theravada and Mahayana branches of Buddhism are both represented in Malaysia, with the former being more prominent among the ethnic Thai and Burmese communities and the latter among the ethnic Chinese and ethnic Indian communities. (Vandenhelsken, 2022) There are also a small number of followers of Vajrayana Buddhism in Malaysia. Overall, Buddhism in Malaysia is heavily influenced by Chinese culture and tradition.

### **Modern Buddhism**

Modern Buddhism refers to the adaptation and application of Buddhist teachings and practices in contemporary society. It can encompass a wide range of interpretations and expressions of Buddhism, but generally, it emphasizes making Buddhism more accessible and relevant to the modern world (Jaffe, 2019). Modern Buddhism in Malaysia is a diverse and dynamic movement that draws on both traditional and contemporary influences. It is characterized by a strong emphasis on lay participation and the integration of Buddhism into daily life, as well as a focus on social and environmental issues. Many Malaysian Buddhists are involved in charitable and community-building activities, and there is a growing interest in meditation and mindfulness practices.

One of the most significant difference between modern and traditional Buddhism is the shift toward a more secular approach. This approach emphasizes the practical application of Buddhism in daily life and encourages individuals to use the teachings of Buddhism to improve their own lives and the lives of others, without necessarily subscribing to traditional religious beliefs.

Another way modern Buddhism is different from traditional Buddhism is that it often integrates Western psychology and science. This integration can take various forms, such as using cognitive-behavioral therapy techniques in meditation practices, or using neuroscience to better understand the effects of meditation on the brain. Additionally, modern Buddhism has also adopted new forms of practices, such as “mindfulness” which focuses on being present in the moment and has been widely adopted in many fields such as healthcare, education, and business. Modern Buddhism also incorporates the use of technology and social media to reach a wider audience, making it more accessible and providing access to teachings, practices, and events to people all over the world. (Williams, 2021)

Overall, modern Buddhism is a dynamic and evolving form of Buddhism that emphasizes making the teachings and practices of Buddhism more relevant and accessible to the modern world, by adapting to the current cultural, social and technological context.

### **Buddhism and Sustainable Economy**

Sustainable economy in Malaysia is an economy that aims to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. It is characterized by economic growth that is socially inclusive, environmentally responsible, and economically efficient. In Malaysia, the government has implemented various

policies and initiatives to promote sustainable economic development. For example, the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS) focuses on balancing economic growth, social well-being, and environmental protection. Additionally, the government has also set targets to increase the renewable energy mix in the country, and promote sustainable tourism, sustainable agriculture, and sustainable urban development. The private sector is also playing a role in this effort, by implementing sustainable practices in their businesses.

Buddhism has been seen as a source of inspiration for the transformation to sustainable economies. The teachings of Buddhism, such as the concepts of interdependence and non-attachment, are seen as being particularly relevant to the current challenges of sustainability. (Daniels, 2007). One of the key principles of Buddhism that is relevant to sustainable economies is the concept of interdependence, which holds that all living beings and natural systems are interconnected and that the well-being of one is dependent on the well-being of all. This principle can be applied to economic systems and encourages individuals and organizations to consider the impact of their actions on the environment and society, and to strive for balance and harmony in economic activities (Suriyankietkaew & Kantamara, 2019)

Another principle of Buddhism that is relevant to sustainable economies is the concept of non-attachment, which holds that individuals should not become attached to material possessions or consumerism. This principle encourages individuals to adopt a more minimalist and sustainable lifestyle, and to focus on what is truly necessary for their well-being, rather than being driven by consumerism and the desire for more. (Song, 2021)

Additionally, Buddhism's emphasis on mindfulness and ethical conduct can be seen as a useful approach for the transition to sustainable economies. Mindfulness can be used to increase awareness of the impact of consumption, and ethical conduct can be used to guide consumption in a more sustainable direction. In summary, the teachings of Buddhism, such as interdependence, non-attachment and mindfulness, can inspire individuals and organizations to make choices that are consistent with the principles of sustainable economies and promote a more conscious and responsible consumption.

## **Research Methodology**

### **Ethnography Through 360 Video Technology**

Recent development in media technology has enabled the collection and preservation of anthropological data through different forms of media (Emmison et al., 2012). As Pink et al. (2015) describes it as technologically enhanced ethnography whereby practices using cameras were introduced and used by researchers as recording tools to be used with field-notes to document interaction, events and subjects within a specific community. As ethnography requires a cyclical process of generating research questions and designing of methodology, field note taking will remain the basic practice of data collection. In recent years, digitization via online tools such as social media has brought on the possibility of new spaces for ethnographers to explore (Postill & Pink, 2012).

In the past, conventional tools such as video cameras and audio recording tapes were used as documenting tools (Tojo, Niida & Oto, 2021). However, in recent years, more researchers have been seen to have utilized 360° video cameras as a tool to enable them to understand their subject (Tojo, Niida & Oto, 2021). As the research aims to



archive Buddhist Street names through narratives from the locals to create awareness of Buddhism within the locale, 360° videos will be used to document these narratives and prominent Buddhist landmarks along the streets with hopes to stimulate and promote an immersive experience to audiences.

This research utilizes Insta 360, Pro2 is used to document heritage buildings along Jalan Berhala, Brickfields. Jalan Berhala itself is a relatively short road. However, the locals suggests that the name of the street itself which was originally “Temple Road” was derived from various places of worship surrounding the locality (Kaur & Isa, 2015). Therefore, for the purpose of this research, the team decided to incorporate its heritage structures from its surroundings into the narrative to provide a better understanding of the origins of the street. This includes the Buddhist Maha Viraha, a 19<sup>th</sup> century temple; the Evangelical Lutheran Church; Church of Our Lady Fatima; Sri Poovadakaliamman Temple; Temple of Fine Arts, Kuala Lumpur and the Sri Sakthi Karpaga Vinayagar Temple. Both the façade and interior of these structures will be archived via virtual reality walkthrough.

As 360° videos provide users with an immersive experience, users feel naturally participative in its environment (Griffin et al, 2017). The video itself is captured in a real place allowing viewers to have an all-round view of the street and structure from all angles. These visual images are then supplemented by corresponding narratives by noblemen, former residents, current street vendors, book author of Brickfields.

## **Application Development**

The final output of 360-degree video requires three stages and there are pre-production, production and post-production. The pre-production involves collection on the

background studies by, first identifying the street name, then collecting historical data through interviews and observation is done on the existing environment to later determine the final usage of technology input and output. Next, research through reading literature review and spontaneous search through internet is performed as to review the challenges in immersive technologies available before identifying the final software and hardware used to produce the 360-degree video immersive application for the audience to interact and experience the heritage. Then, the application design starts with flowchart and storyboard are sketched after obtaining all required data.

Following with the available hardware obtained, the heritage observation and interview sessions are recorded through Insta 360 Pro 2 that allows high resolution of 8k recording in 360-degree video and photography. However, due to the output in YouTube channel to play 360-degree videos, the development only output 4k resolution maximum for users' viewing considering hardware and internet speed compatibility for wider audience access. Nevertheless, the audios recording was done with Zoom H5 Audio Recorder equipped with Sennheiser Wireless Clip Mic Set, RODE Lavalier Mic and AKG Harman K72 headphone.

The production stage involves the development process. Insta360 Stitcher is utilized to stitch all the video footages and compress its quality to 4k resolution output. Then, Adobe software such as Photoshop to produce 2D graphics and Premiere Pro to edit and compile all videos and audios before exporting to YouTube videos. Lastly on the post-production, YouTube account is created, and the 360-degree video titled "Narrative from the Streets – Jalan Berhala" (<https://youtu.be/iSv8xKEIkC0>) is uploaded for public viewing. Audience can now access, view and drop their comments with own YouTube account through the

YouTube application via computers or mobile phones. The current limitation to play high-definition and 360-degree video are subject to user's internet speed and hardware compatibility. For future contents, the YouTube account will be maintained and continuously updates for new contents.

## **Discussion and Conclusion**

In summary, this study is able to archive the narratives from Jalan Berhala in Brickfields, Kuala Lumpur. The stories collected from a different walk of life have contributed to the documentary created for this study. As Jalan Berhala holds a rich history of different religions houses, it is certainly worth to be preserved for the future generation to understand the past of Jalan Berhala. Adapting traditional art with technology can make it more relatable and appealing to youth, ensuring its significance in the present and future.

This research is an example of how ethnography and advanced media technology are able to document and preserve cultural heritage. The project aimed to archive Buddhist street names and associated landmarks along Jalan Berhala in Brickfields, utilizing 360° videos to create an immersive experience for the audience by adopting Insta 360 Pro2 camera to document the street on YouTube. This study demonstrated how immersive media could enhance the understanding and appreciation of heritage sites by incorporating narratives from locals and visually documenting significant structures, the research offers a holistic view of Jalan Berhala's cultural landscape and thus enriching the audience's experience and awareness of Buddhism and other cultures within the area. One of the limitations to the methodology is hardware compatibility and internet speeds which could affect the output of the video. This could be discussed for future research. Another limitation is the compression of the video which is limited

to 4k resolution whereas its recoding can be done in 8K resolution. Improvement on infrastructure and device compatibility should be evaluated to leverage on the full potential of adopting technology as part of the data collection method.

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