

THAILAND

Historic Town of Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns



II.1 Introduction

Year of Inscription 1991

Organisation Responsible for the Report

- 6th Regional Office of Fine Arts, Sukhothai Province, Bureau of Archaeology, Fine Arts Department
- Sukhothai Historical Park
Muang District, Sukhothai 64210
Tel: + 66 55 611 110
Fax: + 66 55 611 110
- Si Satchanalai Historical Park
Muang District, Sukhothai 64130
Tel: + 66 55 641 571
Fax: + 66 55 641 571
- Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park
Muang District, Kamphaeng Phet 62000
Thailand
Tel: + 66 55 711 921
Fax: + 66 55 711 921

II.2 Statement of Significance

Inscription Criteria C i, iii

Statement of Significance

- Proposed as follows:
The historic town of Sukhothai and associated historic towns are comprised of three archaeological sites of great value for national and regional history: the Sukhothai Historical Park, Si Satchanalai Historical Park, and the Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park.
As examples of ancient city planning, both Sukhothai and Si Satchanalai represent seats of political power and religious dominance. Kamphaeng Phet, being a garrison town to the south, would provide lessons for military and strategic studies.
The architectural style of Sukhothai religious structures reflects Khmer and Singhalese influences as well as its own unique contribution. The Sukhothai style of the Buddha's statues and images is often referred to as "the finest of Thai Buddhist art".

"A legal problem arises in the case of the Sukhothai Historical Park from the desire of people living within the borders of the park to own their land. However, this does not affect the property, which has been previously registered as World Heritage."

Status of Site Boundaries

- Borders and buffer zone of the property are considered adequate.
- However, the Sukhothai Historical Park faces a legal problem arising from the desire of people living within its borders to own their land. This does not, however, affect the property, which has previously been registered as WH.

II.3 Statement of Authenticity/Integrity

Status of Authenticity/Integrity

- World Heritage value is considered to have been maintained. No changes are foreseen.
- In the case of the Sukhothai Historical Park, the Fine Arts Dept. has set up a committee called 'The Committee for the Consideration of the Permit for Housing Construction within the Sukhothai Historical Park'. The Committee's duty is to consider the style, height, and suitability of buildings which the locals and the private sector propose to build in the area and which may affect the WH property.

II.4 Management

Administrative and Management Arrangements

- Management of the property is governed within the framework of two national laws: (i) 'Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and Nations Museums' B.E. 2504 (1961), amended in B.E. 2535 (1992); (ii) 'Regulations of the Fine Arts Department Concerning the Conservation of Monuments' B.E. 2528

Present State of Conservation

- "After receiving the World Heritage status in 1991, more excavations and restoration of monuments have been conducted in the area as more than a hundred archaeological sites outside the city wall of Si Satchanalai had not been properly studied. In 1992-2002, excavations and restorations had been practiced in more than 25 sites. The demarcation of the historical park area covering the area of 45 sq. km. was also conducted. The problem Si Satchanalai is facing concerns the communities around the historical park. The original community

which does not negatively affect the World Heritage area will be maintained and developed. There will be a construction control in the near future. The community negatively affecting the World Heritage area will be relocated to a more suitable location.”

- “Some of the plans are being implemented, for instance, the excavation to study the characteristics of building remains, which is controlled, documented, and reported by archaeologists. The experts on architecture, archaeology, conservation, and scientists from the Fine Arts Department and other sectors will conduct the analysis and design restoration plans.”
- At Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park, “there is a plan to relocate the local communities to the area which will not affect the landscape.”

Staffing and Training Needs

- The Sukhothai Historical Park employs 140 people, 123 of which are temporary employees. The Si Satchanalai Historical Park employs 71 people. The Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park employs 92 people.
- In 2003, studies will be conducted to devise and improve implementation plans concerning mainly: (i) excavation, archaeological research and restoration of ancient monuments; (ii) development, conservation of landscapes and control of land use; (iii) development of information and education services; (iv) promotion of tourism and local communities
- The Park still needs architects and/or landscape architects to manage the site considering the recent expansion and the increase in the number of tourists over the last few years.
- The Park also lacks exhibition and retail buildings, guides and electronic devices for exhibition and marketing purposes.

Financial Situation

- “The limited budget allocated by the Government is insufficient to protect, conserve, and revive the site and is being used mainly for tourism management. Even though the site also receives some funding from local private agencies, the funding is still low and could not be used to obtain successful results.”
- The Sukhothai Historical Park has received financial assistance from American Express Co Ltd. for the cleaning of Phra Ajana Buddha Image.
- No figures supplied.
- * International Assistance from WHF: none.

Access to IT

- Neither the Sukhothai Historical Park nor the Si Satchanalai Historical Park provide IT facilities, whether for staff members or visitors.
- The Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park has opened a website and allows visitors to access computers and accessories in their Tourist Information Centre (3

PCs, a laser printer, an ink-jet printer, a modem, a UPS, and a touch-screen computer)

- None of the historical parks uses GIS.

Visitor Management

- There has been an increase in tourist numbers in the three sites over the last few years, causing an expansion of commodities in the vicinities.
- Tourist facilities within the three sites include: tourist information centres, site museums, restrooms, parking lots, restaurants, souvenir shops, leaflets, maps, guidebooks.
- A ‘Plan on the Conservation and Development of World Heritage Sites’ has been implemented to respond to an increasing tourism. The old Master Plan will be improved and a new Master Plan devised through brainstorming sessions between various agencies.

II.5 Factors Affecting the Property

Threats and Risks

- Construction of tourism-related buildings and infrastructures in the areas close to the three sites
- Deterioration of monuments due to natural factors such as tropical climate, underground water level, and earthquake.

Counteractive Plans

- For plans concerned with tourism management, see II.4 – Visitor Management
- In order to prevent natural disasters and to deal with them adequately, an emergency plan has been set up, as well as preparation to act against possible damages.

II.6 Monitoring

Monitoring Arrangements

- The Fine Arts Dept. has set up monitoring measures as follows: (i) a security system to prevent looting, illegal land use, and any other actions which would violate the site regulations; (ii) “threat-based inspections” by archaeologists & technicians; and (iii) conservators to monitor the situation once or twice every year.

Monitoring Indicators

- “The Fine Arts Dept. is in the process of improving the standards of the actual monitoring system in the historical parks.”

II.7 Conclusions and Recommended Actions

Conclusions and Proposed Actions

- As the historic town of Sukhothai and associated historic towns are the finest example of early Thai art and architecture as well as a testimony of the nation building process of the Thai Kingdom, Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai, and Kamphaeng Phet's conservation and promotion are of utmost importance to the Thai Government and people.
- "The upcoming project is to develop historical parks in the area outside the city walls. The timeframe for the management of the Sukhothai and Kamphaeng Phet Historical Parks is ten years whereas the management plan of the Si Satchanalai Historical Park is being adapted."

*** No State of Conservation Reports**

Thailand National Periodic Report

Section II

State of Conservation of Specific World Heritage Properties

Section II: State of Conservation of Specific World Heritage Properties

II.1 Introduction

- a. State Party

Thailand

- b. Name of World Heritage property

Historic Town of Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns

- c. Geographical coordinates to the nearest second

- ***Sukhothai Historical Park, Sukhothai Province***

North-west corner: *Latitude 17° 00' 00" – 17° 03' 00" N*

South-east corner: *Longitude 99° 41' 00" – 99° 44' 00" E*

- ***Si Satchanalai Historical Park, Sukhothai Province***

North-west corner: *Latitude 17° 25' 30" – 17° 26' 00" N*

South-east corner: *Longitude 99° 47' 00" – 99° 47' 40" E*

- ***Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park, Kamphaeng Phet Province***

North-west corner: *Latitude 16° 21' 00" – 16° 33' 00" N*

South-east corner: *Longitude 99° 27' 00" – 99° 32' 00" E*

- d. Date of inscription on the World Heritage List

December 1991

- e. Organization or entity responsible for the preparation of the report

Organization (s) / entity (ies): *The 6th Regional Office of Fine Arts,
Sukhothai Province,
Bureau of Archaeology, Fine Arts Department*

- Person (s) responsible: *Head of the Sukhothai Historical Park*

Address: *Sukhothai Historical Park*

City and Post Code: *Muang District, Sukhothai 64210*

Telephone: *66-55-611110*

Fax: 66-55-611110
Email: -

- Person (s) responsible: *Head of the Si Satchanalai Historical Park*
Address: *Si Satchanalai Historical Park*
City and Post Code: Muang District, Sukhothai 64130
Telephone: 66-55-641571
Fax: 66-55-641571
Email: -

- Person (s) responsible: *Head of the Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park*
Address: *Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park*
City and Post Code: Muang District, Kamphaeng Phet 62000
Telephone: 66-55-711921
Fax: 66-55-711921
Email: -

f. Date of Report

February 2003

g. Signature on behalf of State Party

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Director General, the Fine Arts Department

II. 2 Statement of significance

The historic town of Sukhothai and associated historic towns are comprised of the Sukhothai Historical Park, Si Satchanalai Historical Park, and the Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park. All three historical cities are basically archaeological sites containing important monuments of great value for national and regional history.

As examples of ancient city planning, both Sukhothai and Si Satchanalai being twin capital cities represent seats of political power and religious dominance, traces of which can be studied in the physical remains and their layout in relation to known historical records. Kamphaeng Phet, being a garrison town to the south, would provide lessons for military and strategic studies. All cities have walls and moats for the protection of the ruling officials, Special forested areas outside the city walls were reserved for the residence of Buddhist meditation monks. Inside the city walls are remains of large Buddhist temples built with brick and masonry, but royal palaces made most likely of wood have left no traces.

Outside the northern walls of Sukhothai and Si satchanalai lie the remains of ancient kilns that produced the famous Sangkalok ceramics that Sukhothai exported to places in present-day Indonesia and the Philippines.

Sukhothai has three-stage earthen/laterite walls and man-made reservoirs, ponds and canals, typical of Khmer settlements which dominated the general area before the rise of Sukhothai as a kingdom. Si Satchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet, however, lie close to the rivers, and the city layouts are modified to take advantage of the line of the river. Si Satchanalai has a laterite wall with part missing along the riverside. Kamphaeng Phet was Probably surrounded by an earthen wall which was later reinforced with laterite, forts, battlements and gates.

The architectural style of Sukhothai religious structures reflects Khmer and Singhalese influences as well as its own unique contribution. The Sukhothai style of the Buddha's statues and images is considered the finest of Thai Buddhist art." (Quote from Nomination Report)

Each historic town has different characteristics and values as follows:

Sukhothai Historical Park

This Historical Park contains archaeological evidences and ancient monuments dated around the 13th – 15th Centuries AD covering the period of approximately two hundred years. The grandeur of Sukhothai especially on architecture and arts provides the evidence of the significance of Sukhothai as the first capital of Thailand and the city of origin of Thai language. Sukhothai architecture was initially influenced by Khmer and Sri Lankan culture, but later evolved into its own distinctive style as seen through the Lotus-Bud Chedi known as "Poom Khao Bin". The casting of Buddha images in the Sukhothai period is also an example of the perfect merge between art and faith.

The technology showing the prosperity and civilization of Sukhothai is the irrigation system with the construction of reservoirs and glazed terra cotta water pipes to deliver water into the city. Dikes, moats, and ponds from the Sukhothai period can still be seen nowadays. Besides, the production of the famous “Celadon” wares, which were exported to many countries, shows the high craftsmanship of the Sukhothai people.

Si Satchanalai Historical Park

Si Satchanalai was a center of the communities in the Yom River basin in the early period of the Thai kingdom before Sukhothai. Later it became a major vessel town of Sukhothai. When Ayutthaya expanded its power to Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai was the 2nd grade vessel town of Ayutthaya and its name was changed to “Sawankhalok”. Archaeological evidences show traces of Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism which influenced Si Satchanalai resulting in beautiful religious monuments whose architectural and sculptural styles became the model of Thai art and architecture of the later period. Si Satchanalai was, for a brief period, also an important celadon production site, which brought fame to Sukhothai.

Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park

Kamphaeng Phet was another vessel town of Sukhothai. In the reign of King Luethai of Sukhothai, it was moved to the East of the Ping River and its name was changed to “Cha Kang Rao”. Because it was situated in a strategically important position, Kamphaeng Phet had a lot of strong fortresses, city gates, camps, city walls, and watchtowers built by laterite. This, combined with the history of the local people who strongly fought against their enemies, constituted the name of the city “Kamphaeng Phet” meaning “Diamond Walls”. The Kamphaeng Phet art style was influenced by the Sukhothai art and architecture.

Sukhothai and associated historic towns are the testimony of human creativity. Sukhothai art, as shown through its architecture and arts, is unique as well as beautiful and became the model of all other schools of Thai arts of the later period. The distinctiveness of the Lotus-Bud Chedi and the Walking Buddha image has well identified the success of early Thai arts resulting in the granting of the World Heritage status to Sukhothai and associated historic towns in December 1991.

II. 3 Statement of authenticity/ integrity

“The historic park of Sukhothai represents a Masterpiece of the first Siamese architectural style, these three sites are representative of the first period of Siamese art and the creation of the first Thai state” (Quote from ICOMOS evaluation) The historic town of Sukhothai and associated historic towns is under the responsibility of the 5th Regional Office of Archaeology and National Museums, Sukhothai province, under the supervision of the Fine Arts Department.

Sukhothai Historical Park

In 1975, the Fine Arts Department, as a government agency responsible for the preservation of cultural heritage, decided to develop the Sukhothai ancient city into a historical park. The cabinet approved the project on 20 December 1976 and inscribed the area of 2.5 sq. km. as a project area. Besides, the Fine Arts Department registered the area of 70 sq. km. surrounding the project area as an archaeological site following the Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museums B.E. 2504 (1961). The growth of community living inside the registered area has caused a problem on land ownership to people living there, as they want to legally own the land they are living on. The said problem does not effect the World Heritage, which had previously been registered. The issue of land ownership license in the World Heritage area after the registration is deemed illegal and the license can be withdrawn.

Another matter is the renovation of buildings within the registered area, which has to abide by the ICOMOS conservation guidelines. The Fine Arts Department has set up a committee called “the Committee for the Consideration of the Permit for Housing Construction within the Sukhothai Historical Park”. The Committee’s duty is to consider the styles, height, and the suitability of buildings which the locals and private sector propose to build in the area, which could affect the World Heritage.

Si Satchanalai Historical Park

After receiving the World Heritage status in 1991, more excavations and restoration of monuments have been conducted in the area as more than a hundred archaeological sites outside the city wall of Si Satchanalai had not been properly studied. In 1992-2002, excavations and restorations had been practiced in more than 25 sites. The demarcation of the historical park area covering the area of 45 sq. km. was also conducted. The problem Si Satchanalai is facing concerns the communities around the historical park. The original community which does not negatively affect the World Heritage area will be maintained and developed. There will be a construction control in the near future. The community negatively affecting the World Heritage area will be relocated to a more suitable location.

Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park

Prior to being a World Heritage, the area about 300 metres to the North of the city wall was developed for irrigation purpose to benefit the farming of the communities nearby and beyond. The development did not affect the World Heritage, and there has been no other changes which will negatively affect the World Heritage.

II. 4 Management

The historic town of Sukhothai and associated historic towns are protected by various national laws as follows:

- The Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museums B.E. 2504 (1961) and the Amended Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museums B.E. 2535 (1992)
 - The Ratchaphatsadu Land Act B.E. 2518
 - The Urban Planning Act B.E. 2518
 - The Building Control Act B.E. 2522
 - Land Code B.E. 2497
- Regulations of the Fine Arts Department Concerning the Conservation of Monuments B.E. 2528

Sukhothai Historical Park

After becoming a World Heritage, there have been on-going researches on specific topics such as the research on ancient dam, and the examination on the authenticity of the 1st inscription. Also, there have been academic services such as education service to students and agencies in the area, training on Local Youth Leadership, exhibition on the Sukhothai Historical Park, and the production of printed matters such as leaflets and guidebooks.

There are 140 staff members in the Sukhothai Historical Park as follows:

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----|---------|
| - Government Officials | 4 | persons |
| - Permanent Employees | 13 | persons |
| - Temporary Employees | 123 | persons |

Si Satchanalai Historical Park

After becoming a World Heritage, the Si Satchanalai Historical Park has followed the Master Plan on the Preservation and Development of Historical Parks. In 2003, more studies will be conducted to devise and improve implementation plans to match the present situation of the historical park. Plans already conducted are as follows:

1. Research on arts, history, and archaeology
2. Excavation, restoration, and conservation of ancient monuments
3. Development and Conservation of landscapes
4. Land use and control
5. Community development and income-generation
6. Infrastructure development and building construction
7. Development of tourism and services

Concerning tourism development, the Si Satchanalai Historical Park has one tourist information center, three site museums, four rest pavilions, public telephone, restrooms for normal visitors and disabled visitors, parking space, restaurants, souvenir

shops, one forty-seat monorail, and 24-hour security service. The Historical Park also provides three guides as well as printed matters, leaflets, maps, and guidebooks.

There are 71 staff members at the Si Satchanalai Historical Park as follows:

- Government Officials	5	persons
- Permanent Employees	2	persons
- Temporary Employees	64	persons

Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park

There are four important projects on the management of the Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park which are:

1. Excavation, archaeological research, and restoration of ancient monuments
2. Information and education services
3. Control of land use and landscapes
4. Promotion of local communities and tourism

Some of the plans are being implemented, for instance, the excavation to study the characteristics of building remains, which is controlled, documented, and reported by archaeologists. The experts on architecture, archaeology, conservation, and scientists from the Fine Arts Department and other sectors will conduct the analysis and design restoration plans.

There are communities living in some parts of the Historical Park area. As a result, the Fine Arts Department in collaboration with the Kamphaeng Phet Municipality and the Provincial Office of Urban Planning is using the Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museums B.E. 2504 (1961) (amended in B.E. 2535 (1992)) to control the construction especially on the styles and functions of the building so that they will not affect the monuments and environment. There is a plan to relocate the local communities to the area which will not affect the landscape. At present, the successful relocation of the community at the west corner of the city wall helps expose a full view of the city wall.

The site management and administration system should be revised as the Master Plan for the conservation of World Heritage Sites has just ended, and the communities around the World Heritage Sites have grown bigger. In addition, the Government also would like local communities to participate more in site management following the Constitution B.E. 2540 (1997).

The Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park has provided different facilities

to visitors such as a Tourist Information Center, rest pavilions, 14 signs with the description of monuments, 3 asphalt roads, a website, leaflets, guidebooks, maps, guides, security guards as well as other necessities such as electricity, tap water, telephone, computers and accessories (3 PCs, a laser printer, an ink-jet printer, a modem, an UPS, and a touch-screen computer), but the Historical Park does not have the GIS system.

There are 92 staff members at the Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park as follows:

- | | | |
|------------------------|----|---------|
| - Government Officials | 5 | persons |
| - Temporary Employees | 37 | persons |

The Historical Park still needs architects/or landscape architects as site managers. The budget of the Historical Park is allocated by the Government, but there are increasing demands as the areas to be managed have expanded and there are more visitors to the site.

The Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park also receives funding from the National Committee of the World Heritage Convention and is promoted by UNESCO following the UNESCO International Campaign. The Park still lacks temporary exhibition hall, local guide, youth guide, building for selling and developing souvenirs, vehicle for visitors such as bicycle and car, communication tools for the disabled, and electronic device for exhibition and marketing.

The Park is included in the Tourism Calendar of the Province and the Tourism Authority of Thailand and is used to hold different festivals such as the Banana Festival and the Light and Sound Festival. It is also an education resource for students, researchers, and academics.

II. 5 Factors affecting the property

After being a World Heritage, Sukhothai and associated historic towns have directly been affected by an increase of tourism causing the expansion of communities nearby the sites. The impacts are as follows:

1. The construction of building and infrastructure in the nearby area
2. An influx of tourists due to tourism promotion activities
3. The deterioration of monuments especially those outside the city wall because of natural factors such as tropical climate, underground water level, and earthquake (about 4.0 richter magnitude)
4. The limited budget allocated by the Government to protect, conserve, and revive the site. The budget is partly used for tourism management and the remaining amount is insufficient for site maintenance. Even though the site also receives some funding from

local private agencies, the funding is still low and could not be used to obtain successful results.

However, there has been a plan on the Conservation and Development of World Heritage Sites to answer to an increasing tourism. The old Master Plan will be improved while a new Master Plan will be devised through the brainstorming of different agencies. A special attention will be given to facilities for visitors and community. There is also an emergency plan and preparation to act against any damages which might occur.

II. 6 Monitoring

The Fine Arts Department has set up measures for the monitoring of all historical parks including the historic town of Sukhothai and associated historic towns as follows:

1. To have a security system to prevent looting, illegal land use, and any other actions which will violate the regulations of the site
2. To assign archaeologists and technicians to inspect and take actions when there are threats to the site
3. To conserve the monuments including their decorative elements. Conservators will monitor the situation once or twice every year.

The Fine Arts Department is in the process of improving the standard of the monitoring system in the historical parks.

II. 7 Conclusions and recommended actions

As the historic town of Sukhothai and associated historic towns are the finest example of early Thai art and architecture as well as a testimony of a nation building of the Thai Kingdom, Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai, and Kamphaeng Phet have therefore been granted a World Heritage status. Prior to that, the sites were part of the National Historical Park project. In 1964, the Government approved the project on the Conservation of Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai, and Kamphaeng Phet resulting in the excavation and restoration of the three sites in 1965-1967. The three sites were declared National Historical Parks later (Sukhothai: 1976, Si Satchanalai: 1983, Kamphaeng Phet: 1980). The three sites were also restored in the 80s.

The Fine Arts Department under the Ministry of Education is the agency directly responsible for the National Historical Park project and for the budget allocation on conservation as well as for the collaboration with other organizations on scientific research. The upcoming project is to develop historical parks in the area outside the city walls. The timeframe for the management of the Sukhothai and Kamphaeng Phet

Historical Parks is ten years whereas the management plan of the Si Satchanalai Historical Park is being adapted.

A) IDENTIFICATION

Nomination : Sukhothai and associated towns
Location : Province of Sukhothai
State party : Thailand
Date : 28 September 1990

B) ICOMOS RECOMMENDATION

That this cultural property be included on the World Heritage List on the basis of Criteria I and III.

C) ICOMOS OBSERVATIONS

In June 1991, the World Heritage Bureau recommended the inscription of this property subject to receipt of details concerning the perimeter of the sites nominated, (in particular that of Kampheng Pet).

In early October, 1991, the authorities of Thailand provided the necessary documentation concerning the delimitation of the historic town of Kampheng Pet.

ICOMOS is satisfied with the documentation provided.

C) BACKGROUND

Beginning in the 12th century a people from Yunnan in China settled in the northern regions of the Khmer state. Known as the Thai (free men), they organized themselves in small communities. A Thai prince married a Khmer woman, then revolted against the central power and created the first Siamese state, calling it the kingdom of Sukhothai after the name of its capital city. Ramkhamhaeng (or Rama the Strong), second son of the founder of the state (c.1280-1318) was one of the most important Thai sovereigns, for he brought his state extensive territory through his military victories. He invented the Siamese alphabet (Khmer script). He imposed strict observance of the Buddhist religion and instituted a

military and social organization copied from his vanquished neighbors, the Khmers.

The great civilization which evolved in the kingdom of Sukhothai was a tributary of numerous influences and ancient local traditions, but the rapid assimilation of all these elements forged, in record time, what is known as the "Sukhothai style."

The three old towns nominated for inclusion on the World Heritage List by the Thai government were the principal centers of the kingdom of Ramkhamhaeng: Sukhothai (the capital), Si Satchanalai (second royal residence), and Kampheng Pet. In their architecture (they are built of brick with decorations in stucco and wood), they offer a great variety and skillful mixture of elements inspired by the Singhalese or Khmers. The great meeting rooms with the massive chevet decorated with a monumental portrait of Buddha are specific to Sukhothai architecture and subsequently influenced all Thai art. Among the statuary the first Thai style is distinguished by the particular physical features of the Buddhas: a long, fine nose, a flamelike protuberance on the head (Singhalese influences) and a double line around the mouth (Khmer tradition). Buddha is often represented upright (walking), his clothing clinging to his body, with an almost haughty attitude.

The historic town of Sukhothai lies a dozen or so kilometers from the modern town and still has a large part of its fortifications. The principal monuments include the monastery (wat) Mahathat with its royal temple and its cemetery; Sra Si Wat with its two stupas, their graceful lines reflected in the water of the town's biggest reservoir; and an impressive prang (reliquary tower typical of Ayutthaya art) from a somewhat later period. The site has been excavated and studied since the middle of the last century. A project for an international campaign was adopted by Unesco (1977) and a 70 km² area was declared a historic park (1988). Unfortunately, a modern road was built that cuts the site in two.

The historic town of Si Satchanalai is separated from the modern town by the river Yom. Among the 140 buildings on the site the most notable is the monastery of Chedi Chet Thao (temple with seven points), impressive with its seven rows of elongated stupas, erected to hold the ashes of the governors of the town. Since 1983, the site has been classed a historic park (45 km²). The town was famous for its ceramics.

The historic town of Kampheng Pet (wall of diamonds) played mostly a military role and, even after the fall of the kingdom of Sukhothai, retained strategic importance. Due to this, its monuments are as much in the Sukhothai as in the Ayutthaya style. The site was classed a historic park in 1980 (3.38 km²).

- **Criterion I.** The historic park of Sukhothai represents a masterpiece of the first Siamese architectural style.

- **Criterion III.** These three sites are representative of the first period of Siamese art and the creation of the first Thai state.

ICOMOS, November 1991



Sukhothai : plan du Parc Historique /
plan of the Historical Park



Historic Town of Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns

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Historic Town of Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns

Sukhothai was the capital of the first Kingdom of Siam in the 13th and 14th centuries. It has a number of fine monuments, illustrating the beginnings of Thai architecture. The great civilization which evolved in the Kingdom of Sukhothai absorbed numerous influences and ancient local traditions; the rapid assimilation of all these elements forged what is known as the 'Sukhothai style'.

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Thailand

Sukhothai and
Kamphaeng Phet
Provinces

N17 0 25.992 E99 47
22.992

Date of Inscription:
1991

Criteria: (i)(iii)

Property : 11,852 ha

Ref: 574



English French Arabic Chinese

Russian Spanish Japanese Dutch



Historic Town of Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns



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Outstanding Universal Value

Brief Synthesis

Situated in the lower northern region of present-day Thailand, the Historic Town of Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns is a serial property consisting of three physically closely related ancient towns. The total property area is 11,852 ha., comprising Sukhothai 7,000 ha., Si Satchanalai 4,514 ha., and Kamphaeng Phet 338 ha. Sukhothai was the political and administrative capital of the first Kingdom of Siam in the 13th and 15th centuries. Si Satchanalai was the spiritual center of the kingdom and the site of numerous temples and Buddhist monasteries. Si Satchanalai was also the centre of the all-important ceramic export industry. The third town, Kamphaeng Phet, was located at the kingdom's southern frontier and had important military functions in protecting the kingdom from foreign intruders as well as providing

security for the kingdom's extensive trading network. All three towns shared a common infrastructure to control water resources, and were linked by a major highway known as the Thanon Phra Ruang after the king who constructed it.

Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet all shared a common language and alphabet, a common administrative and legal system, and other features which leave no doubt as to their unity as a single political entity. All three towns also boasted a number of fine monuments and works of monumental sculpture, illustrating the beginning of Thai architecture and art known as the "Sukhothai style."

Under royal patronage, Buddhism flourished and many impressive monasteries were constructed of brick covered with carved stucco, illustrating the idealized beauty and the superhuman characteristics (*mahapurisalakkhana*) of the Lord Buddha and His Teachings. It is from the remains of these religious monuments that today we best know and appreciate the achievements of the people of the Historic Town of Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns.

The Kingdom of Sukhothai is accredited with the invention and development of many of the unique identifying characteristics of Siamese (Thai) culture, many of them attributed directly to the kingdom's most famous and beloved King Ramkhamhaeng, who is considered the Founding Father of the Thai Nation.

The many examples of sculpture, wall paintings and decoration features found within the abandoned temple and monastery compounds are important in establishing the

uniqueness and outstanding importance of the three towns. The art and architecture of Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet have been extensively studied by art historians who have identified and catalogued its unique style, distinctive from Khmer and other earlier regional styles, and who consider the Buddhist monuments and their associated sculptures of the three towns to be masterpieces of artistic creation, giving the art style its own name: "Sukhothai style." Stone inscriptions found at the sites provide evidence of the earliest examples of Thai writing and give a detailed account of the economy, religion, social organization and governance of the Sukhothai Kingdom.

In addition to being the place of pioneering achievements in architecture and art, language and writing, religion and law, the historic towns of the Sukhothai Kingdom were home to accomplished innovators in hydraulic engineering. They modified the landscape of the kingdom in such a way that water was dammed; reservoirs, ponds and canals were constructed; flooding controlled; and water was brought to serve a variety of agricultural, economic and ritual functions as well as to provide the towns' inhabitants with water for their daily lives, avenues of communication, and protection in the form of city moats. From that day onwards until the Rattanakosin period, the kings of Thailand have been acknowledged for their ability to control the kingdom's water.

Sukhothai was a unique state in terms of political and administrative systems which were remarkably egalitarian for the time, based on the patron-client relationships, powerful social and religious institutions, and

codified laws. The kingdom's diverse economic system was based on agricultural production, but also depended heavily on industrial exports, especially of high-quality ceramics. Together, these features made Sukhothai a prosperous time and place, known in Thai history as a Golden Age and "The Happiness of Thai" or "The Dawn of Happiness."

Criterion (i): The Historic Town of Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns represent a masterpieces of the first distinctive Siamese architectural style, reflected in the planning of the towns, the many impressive civic and religious buildings, their urban infrastructure, and a sophisticated hydraulic (water management) system.

Criterion (iii): The Historic Town of Sukhothai and Associated Towns are representative of the first period of Siamese art and architecture, language and literature, religion, and the codification of law, from which was created the first Thai state.

Integrity

The integrity of Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet is to be found, individually for each town, in the large number of intact standing structures and historic urban morphology but is challenged by the ongoing excavation of the monuments programme. The integrity of all three cities together is characterized by the intact landscape engineering which created the elaborate and extensive infrastructure of water reservoirs, canals and roads which were common to all three historic towns and linked them together, giving a political, economic and cultural

coherence to the large territory controlled by the Sukhothai Kingdom.

The integrity of the property is further reflected in the architecture and art features at all sites, as well as the language and content of stone inscriptions discovered on site, in addition to other material culture remains uncovered through archaeological excavation in the three towns. In the past some objects have been removed from Sukhothai for protection. For example King Rama I (1782-1890) removed 2,128 Buddha statues and King Mongkut (Rama IV 1851-1868) found a stone inscription and a stone throne which he also removed.

The entire extent of each historic town is protected within the boundaries of their respective national park, which are also, collectively, the boundaries of the World Heritage property, and no development other than that which serves site protection, conservation and interpretation is allowed. There is no through traffic within the parks, and all activities within the parks are strictly controlled, including the protection of the historic landscape and the strict regulation of the use of the monuments (most of which are the remains of former temples or Buddhist monasteries). This ensures that the archaeological, as well as the historic integrity of the monuments, and the relationship of one to another is maintained.

Authenticity

The authenticity of the Historic Town of Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns is derived from a variety of sources. First and foremost among them is the authenticity of the architectural remains of temples and Buddhist

monasteries which have been protected by custom since they were first constructed. Over their long history of almost 1000 years, the buildings – whether in active use or as historic relics -- have been maintained and repaired using traditional materials and methods. Since the 1960s, with the registration of the remains of the historic towns under government protection, the Thai Fine Arts Department has overseen all maintenance, conservation and repair work.

Archaeological excavations have revealed the remains of economic activities which took place on site, in particular, that of a flourishing ceramic export industry, which has been dated to the period of the Sukhothai Kingdom by thermoluminescence as well as through comparative analysis with dated material from other sites.

Other aspects of the property's authenticity are the modifications of the natural landscape for the purposes of fortification, communication (canals and roads), and for water management (dams, dykes and causeways). These remain intact and their historic functions can be determined. These landscape engineering features have been dated through a variety of chronometric techniques appropriate to archaeology of the historic period, including through palaeontology and palaeo-botanical analysis.

The roads, canals, dams and dykes are still in use today by the local population. The religious establishments in the historic sites continue to be revered and used for worship. Traditional festivals are still maintained on site. The unique Thai language alphabet invented at Sukhothai remains in use today.

And the personalities known from Sukhothai history continue to be respected as the founders of the Thai nation.

Management and protection requirements necessary to maintain OUV



The Historic Town of Sukhothai and its Associated Historic Towns are managed as three independent historical parks under the direction of the Fine Arts Department, Ministry of Culture, which ensures that the management of the three parks is coordinated as a single World Heritage property. The sites were gazetted and protected by Thai law through the *Act on Ancient Monuments, Antiques, Objects of Art and National Museums*, B.E. 2504 (1961) as amended by Act (No. 2), B.E. 2535 (1992), enforced by the Fine Arts Department, Ministry of Culture. There are also related laws enforced by related government units which give further protection to the property, such as the [Ratchaphatsadu Land Act, B.E. 2518 \(1975\)](#), the City Planning Act B.E. 2518 (1975), the [Enhancement and Conservation of National Environmental Quality Act, B.E. 2535 \(1992\)](#), the Building Control Act B.E. 2522 (1979) as amended by Act (No. 2) B.E. 2535 (1992), as well as municipal regulations. In addition to legal protection, master plans, action plans, personnel development plans, and regulations on the control of *building construction and land use within the compounds of ancient monuments are in force at the three parks*. The budget allocated for the conservation and development of the historical parks comes from the Government and the private sector.

Within the current framework of the reform of national administration which aims to decentralize government functions and responsibilities, it is expected that local, regional, and national committees for the protection of World Heritage will be established. These committees will enhance collaboration with universities and non-governmental professional organizations which work to conserve heritage sites.

Visitation will continue to be promoted and managed, as Sukhothai and its associated historic towns are major international and domestic tourist destinations, particularly during the annual Loy Krathong festival. There is an airport nearby dedicated almost exclusively to bringing visitors to the historic towns, and visitor facilities are expected to increase.

The Fine Arts Department aims to disseminate further knowledge of the historic significance of the three individual sites and of the World Heritage property as a whole. At Sukhothai, there is a branch of the National Museum, with information centres at Si Satchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet. These hold important research collections of art and archaeology from the three sites.

Media

-  [Historic Town of Sukhothai and Associated Historic Towns \(UNESCO/NHK\)](#)
-  [NHK World Heritage 100 Series](#)