

Thailand National Periodic Report

Section II

State of Conservation of Specific World Heritage Properties

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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*

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- Person (s) responsible: *Head of the Si Satchanalai Historical Park*
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Telephone: 66-55-641571
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- Person (s) responsible: *Head of the Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park*
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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:

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|------------------------|-----|---------|
| - 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.