Sukhothai was the ancient capital of the first Thai kingdom and the prominent era in Thai history. Sukhothai remains still the name of a modern province of Thailand.

The great civilisation that evolved in the Sukhothai era gave rise to unique artistic, architectural, cultural and administrative styles. Pagodas, stone inscriptions, Buddha images, potteries and artifacts recovered in Sukhothai and associated historic towns reflect the height of craftsmanship and creativity. Such cultural properties have been passed down the generations.

Historians have long been studying the history of Sukhothai. But it was only in the 1970s that Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet ruins were declared historical parks for providing valuable insight into Thailand’s history, arts and culture.

The historical sites earned global recognition when they were inscribed in the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1991. UNESCO valued the sites for their unique artistic and architectural heritage as well as for their historical significance as the very first Kingdom of Thailand.

Sukhothai was the centre of communities along the Ping and lower Yom river basins during the late thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. The emergence of Sukhothai and its satellite towns represented a shift from a small community to a cluster of towns with distinctive political and cultural characteristics. Sukhothai absorbed numerous influences from its neighbours and adopted unique arts and architecture, which had an enduring effect on following generations.
Antiques indicating human settlements in the pre-Sukhothai period. Ancient tools discovered on Kalon mountain and Klung canal in Kamphaeng Phet province include earrings, spades and earthen pots.

-A golden leaf embossed in Singha or monkey pattern for making pendants. These were prehistoric ornaments found at Ban Wang Hat archaeological site in Sukhothai.

This earthenware lamp of the Dvaravati period was discovered in the ancient city of Trai Trueng in Kamphaeng Phet.

Behind a hillock that served as a wall around Sukhothai lie religious structures reflecting almost 200 years of glory of this town centre of the Yom River valley. The rise to glory since the late thirteenth century did not come swiftly. For several years the small community gathered manpower, resources and knowledge before snowballing into a large city.

Archaeological finds point to human habitation in the Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet areas for over a thousand years. Unearthed human skeletal remains, iron tools, polished stone axes, traces of mining, potteries and bead ornaments date back to between the prehistoric and Dvaravati periods.

Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet locations were ideal for settlements, with nearby waterways serving as sources of water supply and transportation routes. The sites also sat on an ancient route of Southeast Asia. The route take travellers westward to the bustling port of Mottama on the Bay of Bengal. To the east the route linked with communities in the Khorat basin and as far as the Mekong River basin.

Around the thirteenth century, moats and ramparts were erected. They provided evidence of urban communities that took root. The first urban community was founded at Wat Phra Phai Luang, now located north of the ruined Sukhothai town. Another urban community of the same period was Chalieng along the Yom River to the east of the Si Satchanalai remnants.

Similar to many parts of Thailand during the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, religious structures remaining in both communities show the influence of Lavo arts in the Pasak River valley and the Khmer culture of Phra Nakhon (Angkor).
Prehistoric skeletal remains, potteries and ornaments were retrieved along the Yom River at Wat Chom Chuen, Ban Phra That, Si Satchanalai district of Sukhothai. The finding point to over a thousand years of human settlements along the Yom River.
Wat Phra Phai Luang community was located north of Sukhothai town. This twelfth-century community existed prior to Sukhothai. The rectangular town was surrounded by moats. In the heart of the community stood the important temple of Wat Phra Phai Luang, a religious site of Mahayana Buddhism.

(Above) Chalieng was an early town of Si Satchanalai, located on the concave side of the Yom River, sandwiched by the river both north and south. The city stretched in the shape of a conch shell, an auspicious symbol of ancient times.

(Left) Ta Pha Daeng shrine at Sukhothai is a small-scale Khmer-style stone sanctuary. The laterite sanctuary was built on a high base by local artists in the pre-Sukhothai period.
Wat Si Sawai is located within the ancient Sukhothai walls. Its prominent triple prang in Khmer style was at the beginning conceived as a Brahman Hindu religious place. It was later converted into a Buddhist temple by additional construction of a vihara, or assembly hall, in front of the prang.
The Sukhothai Landscape

A pond in the centre of the town provides crystal clear drinking water... no different from water in the Mekong River, for consumption during the dry season. The walls enclose Sukhothai city, stretching for a distance of 3,400 wah [6,800 metres]

Standing in front of Wat Mahathat in the centre of Sukhothai ruins, the slender lotus-bud chedi is silhouetted against the sprawling mountain range. There is a harmony between man-made structures and natural peaks.

The mountain range in the background is Khao Luang. It was a source of water, plants, minerals and wildlife for ancient Sukhothai populations to rely upon, create tools and find goods to trade with other communities. This lush mountain range was a crowd puller. Sukhothai also sat on the ancient communication route linking India's Bay of Bengal in the west with the Mehong River and the South China Sea in the east. It also had routes linking with mountain communities to the north and with Chao Phraya River basin communities to the south. Sukhothai thus rose as one of the key town centres of Southeast Asia during the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries.

However, as Sukhothai is located on a slope between Khao Luang mountain and the Yom River, it was gripped by dry spells during the dry season and hit by river run-offs in the rainy season.

Archaeological studies have found that Sukhothai people solved the harsh weather situation with an
irrigation system both inside and outside the town walls. Dykes were erected to divert forest run-offs. Dykes and canals helped counter floodwaters and siphon water into numbers of town ponds for consumption.

A dyke called “Phra Ruang Road” was found that connected Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet. Historians argued the dyke was meant for water management, not a road as named.

Sukhothai expanded from Wat Phra Phai Luang community. It was located on a slope sandwiched by mountains and the Yom River. It was not on a riverfront as in the cases of Si Satchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet. The rectangular town was enclosed by three layers of walls and moats. Two outer walls were erected later for flood prevention and water management purposes. Abundant religious sites reflected the importance of the town.

1. Khao Luang
2. Saritphong
3. Sao Ho Canal
4. Triple City Walls and Moats
5. Wat Traphang Ngoen
6. Wat Si Sawai
7. Wat Mahathat
8. Wat Chetuphon
9. Wat Traphang Thong
10. Wat Chana Songkhram
11. Wat Sa Si
12. Ta Pha Daeng Shrine
13. Wat Phra Phai Luang
14. Wat Si Chum
15. Mae Lamphan Canal
Sukhothai as the City Centre of the Ping, Yom and Nan River Basins

*Phraya Si Nao Nam Thom rules two cities. One is Sukhothai. The other is Si Satchanalai, where Phra Si Ratana Mahathat is situated.*

**Wat Si Chum Stone Inscription**

Apart from a perfect setting for commerce, the fall of great kingdoms like Pagan in the west and Phra Nakhon in the east allowed rulers of small towns in Thailand to strengthen and flourish. Among them was Sukhothai city with a strong ruler. Sukhothai emerged as the capital of the first kingdom in Thai history. There were over 50 towns under the rule of Sukhothai, spreading across the Ping, Yom and Nan river valleys. The area covered present Sukhothai, Tak, Uttaradit, Kamphaeng Phet, Phisanulok, Phichit, Phetchabun and Nakhon Sawan provinces.

The capital of the kingdom was one that developed an individual administrative system, forged political ties with neighbours and developed arts and culture of its own. Sukhothai stone inscriptions have shed light on its history and on rulers of nearly 200 years of the Phra Ruang dynasty. Highly artistic ancient ruins and finds all mirror the stability and prosperity of this kingdom centre.

Another key town in the Sukhothai period was Si Satchanalai, which sat at the foot of Phanom Phloeng hill. It expanded from the former Chalieng community the same way that Sukhothai spread from the Wat Phra Phai Luang community. Some historical assumptions referred to Si Satchanalai and Sukhothai as twin towns, that a ruler controlled both towns together, thus merging the land, resources, power and manpower for the benefits of both.

Along the Ping River were Thep Nakhon, Trai Trueng and Nakhon Chum towns, also in the Sukhothai period. Later, in the fifteenth century, Nakhon Chum was relocated to the opposite side of the river and renamed Kamphaeng Phet. It served as a northern fortified town of the Ayutthaya Kingdom.
Inside Sukhothai wall is an array of ancient ruins. The splendid Buddha images, chedi, vihara and stucco sculptures reflected the glory of this ancient town centre.
Stunning stucco reliefs on the chedi of Wat Mahathat depict the Buddha entering nirvana.

Nakhon Chum, an early settlement of Kamphaeng Phet, had Wat Phra Baromathat, located in the heart of the town. The town lay along the Ping River. Phra Baromathat Nakhon Chum used to be a lotus-bud chedi in keeping with Sukhothai's favoured style. Later, in the Rattanakosin era, a wealthy Burmese who sponsored the chedi renovation reconstructed it in the Burmese style.

Wat Mahathat lay at the core of the Sukhothai era. Chedis and viharas, which dotted the temple compound, were renovated several times during the Sukhothai and Ayutthaya periods.

Si Satchanalai, located on the bank of the Yom River, was constructed around the Phanom Phloeng hill. On the top of the hill is Wat Suwannakhiri. The town construction reflected the belief of people giving respect to the hill, which was the symbol of sacred supernatural power.
The painting below shows a replica of Wat Chang Rop in Kamphaeng Phet.
Sukhothai Religious Beliefs

In the north of Sukhothai is the vihara of the great teacher “Phra Kaphung [Pi]”, a spirit that is greater than any spirits in the town. A Sukhothai ruler who properly pays homage to Phra Kaphung will lead the city right. Those who fail to do so will not receive protection from the great spirit.

Stone Inscription No.1

Art and architecture of Lavo and Khmer styles influenced by Phra Nakhon arts in the pre-Sukhothai period were found in Wat Phra Phai Luang and Chalieng. Similar to several towns in the eleventh to thirteenth centuries, the influence of Mahayana Buddhism blended with Brahman-Hindu religions, that came from Phra Nakhon, can be seen at Yom riverine communities.

Despite such imported religious faiths, Stone Inscription No.1 describes the “Phra Kaphung Pi” of Khao Luang hill as a great spirit, highly influential to the town’s well-being. Such belief in the supernatural widely existed in Southeast Asia in olden times.

The above statement reflected the belief of Sukhothai people towards the hill, the origin of water and natural resources, as a sacred area. Although Buddhism was the main religion, the town ruler was obliged to worship the spirit properly for the sake of public peace and city prosperity.

Such belief was underscored by the discovery of a statue of Phra Mae Ya, the great grandmother, on Khao Phra Mae Ya atop Khao Luang, which remains the most-revered statue of Sukhothai.

The statue of Phra Mae Ya on Khao Phra Mae Ya was carved from stone by native artisans. The highly revered sculpture was installed at Phra Mae Ya shrine in Sukhothai municipality.
Lintel showing reclining Vishnu (Narai Banthomsin) from Wat Si Sawai, a Brahman-Hindu temple.

Vishnu image from Wat Si Sawai, made of sandstone.

A bronze Vishnu image in Sukhothai style.

Khmer-style god and goddess images from Ta Pha Daeng shrine, made of sandstone.
The pagoda of Wat Chao Chan is situated on the bank of the Yom River. The temple shows the Khmer influence in Chalieng before the Sukhothai period. The pagoda was constructed in the same period as one in Wat Phra Phai Luang in Sukhothai.

Stucco reliefs on the western lintel of Wat Phra Phai Luang depict the Buddha after enlightenment.

Wat Phra Si Ratana Mahathat Chalieng was an ancient temple of Mahayana Buddhism. The temple remnants include its entrance arch, decorated with a stucco face of Avalokitesvara on all four sides. It reflects the influence of Khmer arts of the Bayon period, under the reign of the Khmer King Jayavarman VII, when Mahayana Buddhism was at its peak.
Wat Phra Phai Luang was the centre of the pre-Sukhothai communities. Its oldest structures are three pagodas built under Mahayana Buddhist concepts. Only the north pagoda is in good condition.

Wat Phra Phai Luang remains an important Sukhothai temple. The chedi and also the Buddha images in four postures in front of the pagoda were constructed later.
Sukhothai residents, including King Ramkhamhaeng the Great, often make merit and follow religious precepts.... With faith in Buddhism, they observe the precepts in the rainy season.

Stone Inscription No.1

Rows of chedis sprout up in the complex of Wat Chedi Chet Thaeo in the leafy Si Satchanalai historical park. The huge Wat Chang Lom of Sri Lankan style can be seen from behind, against a wonderful background of Phanom Phloeng hill. The hill sits at the heart of the city.

The Sri Lankan-style pagoda set on a square base, studded with elephant buttresses, is a common sight in prominent towns of the Sukhothai period. The style was based on Lankavamsa Buddhism's belief that the surrounding elephant buttresses would help support the religion.

Religious sites of Sri Lankan style or Hinayana Buddhism in Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet historical parks and nearby cities were built in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. At that time Hinayana Buddhism flourished in Thailand, Burma and Laos. Scholars believe Hinayana Buddhism reached Sukhothai via the western city of Mon.

The role of religion was no longer confined to spiritual senses, but also defined a town's stance and the legitimacy of its rulers. Rulers who asserted their role as religious patrons could curry favour from their subjects as an ideal leader. Many stone inscriptions say Phraya Li Thai, after his ordination at Wat Pa Mamuang, went to pay homage at Phra Baromathat chedis in key towns. At his order, footprints of the Buddha were enshrined on hills in the towns under Sukhothai administration. The footprints can be found on Phra Bat Yai hill outside Sukhothai and on Nang Thong hill in Bang Pan.

The practice of Lankavamsa Buddhism gave rise to religious structures and works of art. Among them were Buddha footprints, construction of temples in forests, worship of the Buddha’s relics, Chang Lom pagoda (elephant-encircled pagoda) and Buddha images in four postures.
The construction of Wat Mahathat in each city derived from the worship of Lord Buddha’s relics according to Lankavamsa Buddhism. Such worship can be traced back to the Dvaravati era (fifth century). It evolved into the building of Wat Mahathat as a spiritual centre for people of different status or race.
(Left) Wat Phra Si Ratana Mahathat is the prominent temple of Chalieng city. Its pagoda was built in the Ayutthaya period above a previous religious structure.

(Right) Wat Phra That is located in the heart of the ancient town of Kamphaeng Phet.

(Left) Buddha images in four postures are stylistically typical of Sukhothai. Four large Buddha images in standing, walking, reclining and sitting positions are conjoined at the back, and face four different
directions. The style is thought to be influenced by Pagan. As such, Sukhothai might have adopted the Lankavamsa sect of Hinayana Buddhism from Mon and Pagan.

The Buddha images in four postures are enshrined at Wat Phra Si Triyabot in Kamphaeng Phet. (Right) The construction of the chedi with elephant sculpture surrounding its base followed Lankavamsa Buddhism in that the elephant is considered an auspicious animal, a symbol of stability, and thus a supporter of Buddhism. The chedi at Wat Chang Lom was popular in the Sukhothai period, mushrooming in Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet cities. The style is characteristic of Sukhothai arts and can be seen in post-Sukhothai periods such as Chiang Mai and Ayutthaya. The photo captures the chedi at Wat Chang Lom in Si Satchanalai.

A series of stucco reliefs of the birth of the Buddha, on the lintels of the main chedi at Wat Mahathat in Sukhothai, are noted for their most refined craftsmanship.
The worship of Buddha footprints is based on the belief that the Buddha visited various places, particularly major towns. The footprints can be seen in India, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Cambodia and Thailand. The belief dates back to the Dvaravati period.

The footprints typically feature the 108 auspicious signs, representing fertility, luck, ornaments of kings and emperors, and the belief about the universe. The photo shows four Buddha footprints in stone, found in Sukhothai.

Engraved stone planks adorn the tunnel of Wat Si Chum in Sukhothai. The planks feature the Jataka – 550 stories of previous incarnations of the Buddha before he attained enlightenment. The same style was also used in decorating chedis at Pagan in Myanmar.
Sukhothai-Style Buddha Images

The walking Buddha images of the Sukhothai era are a special expression of artists. The artists succeeded in creating the most refined pieces of art. Indeed, the Walking Buddha images by Sukhothai artists are masterpieces.

Prof. Silpa Bhirasi

Sukhothai Buddha images are praised for their splendour. The exceptional beauty of Sukhothai Buddhist art is the product of the years the artists spent honing their skills and creativity to uphold Buddhism, coupled with unrelenting support from the monarchy.

Phra Achana of Wat Si Chum is a large Buddha image in “Subduing Mara” posture. The image is installed inside the mondop and stands out through a slit in the mondop entrance when viewed from a distance.
Sukhothai Buddha images have combinations of oval face, absence of hair lines, arched eyebrows, hook-shapes nose, long ears, and thin lips with a hint of a light smile. The face and body of the images are well-proportioned and graceful. The face carries the Buddha’s blessing for every living thing, but at the same time, suggests calmness and self-contentedness.

Sukhothai Buddha images are mostly in the meditation and “Subduing Mara” postures. However, the unique and most famous form of Buddha image is the Walking Buddha, which conforms to the story of the Buddha descending from Tavatimsa heaven. Some art historians believed such art form is redolent of Pagan style.

The gracefulness of Sukhothai Buddha images inspired creators of Buddhist art in the same period and also later generations, such as Chiang Mai and Ayutthaya.

Phra Attharot, measuring nine metres tall, depicts the standing Buddha. Huge standing Buddha images, as in Wat Mahathat (right) and Wat Saphan Hin (far right), were popular in the Sukhothai period.
The Walking Buddha image is enshrined in the vihara of Wat Si Ratana Mahathat in Chalieng. The Walking Buddha has been popular since the late fourteenth century. The image derived from the episode of the Buddha returning from Tavatimsa heaven after preaching doctrine to his mother. Sukhothai Walking Buddha images were supremely graceful figures with the Buddha’s leg posed to move forward. The Walking Buddha posture is widely regarded as Sukhothai’s unique religious art form.

(Above) Buddha images in the “Subduing” posture were very popular in the Sukhothai period.
The main chedi of Wat Mahathat in Sukhothai is in the shape of a lotus bud, the popular shape found only in the Sukhothai era. The lotus-bud chedi is typically the main chedi of a temple.

Prince Narisara Nuwatvongse

The lotus-bud chedi, or Thanan-shape chedi as Prince Narisara Nuwatvongse put it, is the much-praised definitive style of Sukhothai architecture.

The chedi rests on a high square base with indented corners. The chedi tip is shaped like a lotus bud, from which its name derived. The origin of the chedi remains unknown as the structure did not appear in any pre- or post-Sukhothai period. It is said to have gained popularity during the reign of King Li Thai, which was the pinnacle of the Sukhothai era.

The lotus-bud chedi is a unique art form of Sukhothai and testament to Sukhothai influence as examples can be spotted in Si Satchanalai, Kamphaeng Phet, Phitsanulok and even as far north as Chiang Mai.
The main chedi of Wat Chedi Chet Thaeo is a lotus-bud chedi. The lotus-bud chedi is the only surviving structure of Wat Galo Thai, which is located outside the walls of the ancient city of Kamphaeng Phet.

Sangkhalok Ware

A two-colour glazed Sangkhalok spouted vessel contains a white glaze as a background and flower designs in brown. A green Sangkhalok jar.

There are two tambons in Sawankhalok with a large number of kilns. It was later found that the Sangkhalok products were exported far to Java, Malayu and the Philippines. The earthenware was of high quality, some even matched the
Glazed earthen jars decorated with a black pattern of leaves and flowers intertwined around a white background displayed in souvenir shops at Ban Ko Noi in Si Satchanalai district of Sukhothai attract many westerners. This village is a production hub of antique pottery reproductions, better known as “Sangkhalok”.

Underneath this little village on the bank of the Yom River, archaeologists found a number of Sangkhalok kilns, dating back to the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, built on top of each other. It showed that the place was also a Sangkhalok production site in the Sukhothai period.

Sangkhalok refers to solid earthenware, painted, glazed or unglazed, produced in old Sukhothai and Si Satchanalai. Sangkhalok production dates back to the eleventh century. There are several theories as to how the pottery got its name. One is that it is a corruption of Sawankhalok (the name of Si Satchanalai during the Ayutthaya period), where the kilns were found. Others believe it originates from Sung Kolok, meaning the kilns of the Sung dynasty in China, which influenced its production.

Sangkhalok started off by making utensils for local communities and later exported them to neighbouring cities. The earliest products were pretty rough. Wish clay as raw material, the texture was coarse. Around the thirteenth century, marl was added to give a fine texture.

Sangkhalok industry has evolved in terms of preparing raw materials, forms, glaze formula and decorative designs. During the Ayutthaya period, between the late fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, Sangkhalok trade flourished as a main export product for Ayutthaya. The production sites were scattered around Ban Ko Noi and Pa Yang in Si Satchanalai.
(Above left) Sangkhalok architectural decorations, one a toothed lath and the other depicting Magorn, a mythical creature.

(Above right) A Sangkhalok doll of a mother holding her child.

(Above) Sangkhalok ware found in an argosy sunk in the Gulf of Thailand. The discovery shows Sangkhalok exports were transported through the Yom River. During the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries Ayutthaya rose as a key trading port of Southeast Asia.
Sangkhalok ceramics were warmly received in ancient export markets for their best quality and unique designs. They also came in different colours. The two-coloured Sangkhalok had black patterns on a white background. There were also brown Sangkhalok ceramics. And celadon Sangkhalok came in a wide range of green shades, including yellowish green, smoky green and olive green.

There are two types of Sangkhalok brick kilns found in Sukhothai and Si Satchanalai – updraft kilns, called Tra Grab, and cross draft kilns called Pra Tun.

In the photos are Pra Tun kilns in Ban Koo Noi, a centre of the Sangkhalok ceramic industry in Si Satchanalai, where kilns were found scattered and piled up on top of one another along the Yom River. Si Satchanalai was a major Sangkhalok exporter to Ayutthaya due to excellent raw materials and its riverside location, convenient for transportation.
(Above Top) A painting showing a replica of a round Tra Grab kiln with holes at the bottom for ventilating heat vertically.

(Above) A painting showing a replica of a Pra Tun kiln in the shape of a tortoiseshell. Its large interior chamber could contain much earthenware. A front outlet was specially designed to circulate and intensify the heat horizontally. Initially, this kiln was built underground but later built with bricks in an arch shape.
The Future of World Heritage

A bird’s-eye view of Sukhothai Historical Park, which was renovated to become one of the most important sites for historical studies and tourism.

World Heritage is a gift from our past, a part of our present and what we will pass on to the next generations.

UNESCO

After UNESCO’s World Heritage Committee declared Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet historical parks the World Cultural Heritage No.574, the parks witnessed major changes, particularly an influx of Thai and foreign visitors.

However, World Heritage status is meant as a wake-up call to mankind of the “value” of civilisation created by our ancestors. It is UNESCO’s belief that “World Heritages are the properties of the world community. The UNESCO certification is simply to encourage protection and maintenance of valuable natural and cultural heritages around the world.”

With such values as the mankind heritage, it is crucial to make the values of the past in social and cultural aspects as the root of our present time and urge them to guard and maintain World Hritages, which are more than just tourist spots.

At present, Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet historical parks are under the care of the Fine Arts Department. To raise a sense of protection among the general public requires participation of
locals and private agencies. This way, present World Heritage Sites can be kept in good condition for future generations.

Such a tall order which, although it will take time to achieve, can definitely yield a great outcome for the future.

Ancient wells found scattered densely in the west of Sukhothai. Only 20 year ago the water from these wells could be used. Unfortunately, at present most of them are not properly looked after.
World Heritage Values

The remains of ancient monuments and art objects at the sites of present-day Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet reflect the so-called “dawn of happiness” period and the dawn of Thai history. From the declaration of independence from the Khmers and the formation of the first Thai kingdom, until the 13th to 14th centuries when Sukhothai was one of the most important centres in Southeast Asia, spans a period of over two hundred years. Because of its historical importance, Sukhothai and its associated towns were developed as historical parks and were added to the World Heritage List in 1991 under the following criteria:

| Criteria I: | represents a masterpiece of human creative genius. |
| Criteria II: | bears a unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or to a civilization which is living or which has disappeared. |

The monument and art objects in Sukhothai and its associated towns: Si Satchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet reveal a high level of expertise and the architectural and artistic style of the kingdom become the prototype of art in later periods. The characteristic stupa in the form of a lotus bud or “phum khao bin” together with Buddha images in a walking position are proof of this success.

Site Management

The three ancient towns – Sukhothai, Si Satchanalai and Kamphaeng Phet – were registered as ancient monuments according to the Act on Monuments, Ancient Objects, Art Objects and National Museums of 1961, under the authorization of the Fine Arts Department, Ministry of Education. The government granted permission to draw up plans to develop the sites as historical parks in order to better preserve them and bring the ancient civilization of life. The plan for the three sites included historical research, preservation and conservation of ancient monuments and objects, land use regulation for the community and the promotion of tourism.

Sukhothai Historical Park is located in Muang Kao sub-district, Muang district, twelve kilometres from Sukhothai province. There are approximately two hundred monuments inside and beyond the city walls. The seventy square meters area of the ancient site of Sukhothai was declared an historical park in the Royal Gazette in 1977. The project for the restoration and development of Sukhothai Historical Park has been in the National Economic and Social Development Plan since the fourth cycle.

The Historical Park of Si Satchanalai is situated on the banks of the river Yom in Si Satchanalai district, around thirty kilometers from Sukhothai Historical Park. In 1988, the site was declared an historical park in the Royal Gazette. The park covers an area of 45.14 square meters, and has approximately one hundred and forty monuments both inside and beyond the city walls.

The Kamphaeng Phet Historical Park is in Muang district, three kilometers from Kamphaeng Phet province. The site, which covers an area of 3.83 square meters and contains around sixty monuments, was declared an historical park in 1982.
ที่มาของข้อมูล : วิชิดีมรดกไทย มรดกโลก บริษัท ปตท.สำรวจและผลิตปิโตรเลียม จำกัด (มหาชน)