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 kingodm of Ramkhamhaeng: Sukhothai (the capital), Si Satchanlai (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 towns'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 governers 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

NORTH

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