

## Wat Mahathat ( SUKHOTHAI )



*King Ramkhamhaeng* was the most important King of Sukhothai. Wat Mahathat is situated within Sukhothai city centre. It is a great and very important temple of Sukhothai. Wat Mahathat is the largest monastery in the city and was probably founded in the 13<sup>th</sup> century; it was rebuilt in the first half of 14<sup>th</sup>. It is surrounded by brick walls and by a moat. It consist of more than 200 chedis. The lotus-bud shaped chedi is the main of this temple that surrounded with 8 minor chedis at each of the 4 sides.



The characteristics of this chedi demonstrates the influence of Khmer art that has been existed before the diffusion of the Ceylonese art to this region. The impressive style of the chedi with its top section in a lotus-bud style is unique to the architectural style of the Sukhothai period. This is considered from the way in integrates Khmer and Ceylonese styles together. This chedi is used to house the sacred relics of Lord Buddha that is in accordance to the belief of Buddhism (Ceylonese ideology).



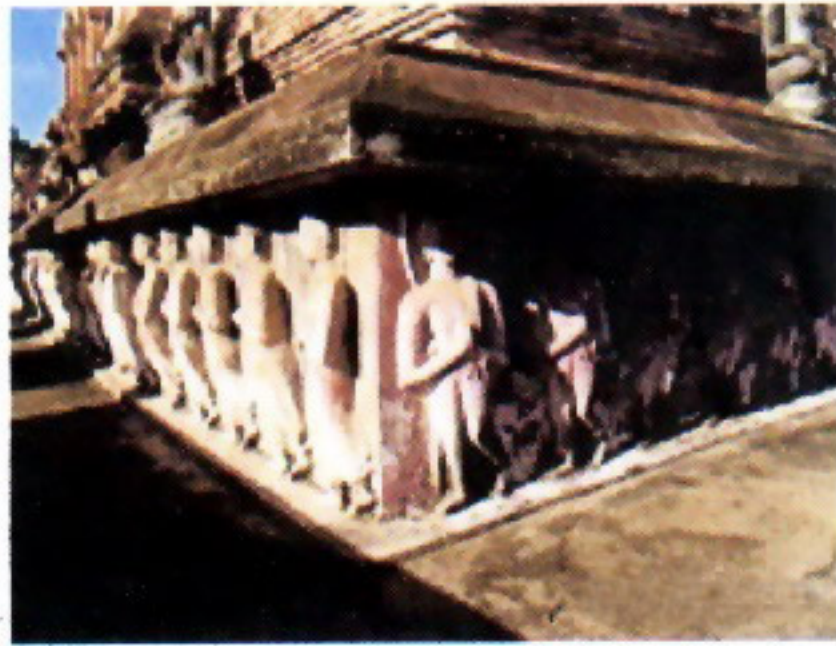


Beyond the inner section of Wat Mahathat, it is the area of Wihan where has shown its significance and outstanding characteristics. The grand hall or the grand is Wihan situated adjacent to the central chedi. It was used to house a bronze Buddha image in Sukhothai style. It was cast during King Li-Thai . King Rama I has taken the image to the grand hall of Wat Suthatthepwararam in Bangkok, and its was known as Phra Sri Sakayamuni after that. The tall Wihan is situated next to the grand hall. It has tall pedestal. Presumable, it was built when the Ayuthaya ruled Sukhothai.

The monasteries's Bot (a place where the monks are gathered for rites) was on the northern side of the Mahathat; its stucco image has been restored. The monastery had ten different Wihan, a single Bot, and eight structures with niches for images. This wealth of monuments proves that the principal monastery of the city once flourished.







One thing typical for the Sukhothai era are the Buddha Images and Monk-images, in walking position. Almost everywhere in Thailand, whenever you see a Buddha Image, you will see it sitting down or standing. Hardly anywhere -except in Sukhothai, you will see *walking* Buddha Images decorated with walking Monks.

A stone frieze runs around the square base of the central group of chedis. It depicts monks processing around the shrine.

Both side of the central chedi , there are Mondops that houses a standing Buddha with 9 meters height. This image is in Ceylonese style. According to the inscription of King Ramkhamhang, it is called Phra Attharot.

