

Synopsis^[*]

by David Rogers. This book, *“The Royal National Reserve of Thailand”*, or *The Klangluang of Thailand*, is divided into two parts. The first details the history of the Royal National Reserve—originally a fund maintained by the monarch for use in times of need—and its importance to the country’s well-being and continued independence. Also considered is its modern role in backing up the value of the Thai currency and its importance during times of war. Historical evidence suggests that the *Klangluang* is the “heart” of the nation. Following a royal tradition dating from the Ayutthayan period, it was formalized by **King Rama III** as a reserve to be used to aid Thailand in times of need. Nowadays it exists alongside the Bank of Thailand’s reserve fund as twin bulwarks against national adversity. As important as—and even more important than—the Bank’s reserve, it was intended that the *Klangluang* be kept untouched and used only in dire circumstances that threatened Thailand’s sovereignty. Were it to be exhausted, the nation would immediately experience calamity as nearly occurred in 1894 when Thailand was threatened by colonizers. At that time, 23 tons of gold donated by the monarch and the Thai public (the so-called *Ngern Toong Dang*, literally translated “red money-bag”), enabled the country to maintain its independence and escape colonization. Had the effort failed, Buddhism and the monarchy would have ultimately collapsed as it did in neighboring countries. More recently, the *Klangluang* aided the country in responding to the “economic crisis” of 1997 by helping to maintain some of the value of the Thai baht and prevent its becoming worthless paper. In addition, interest earned on the *Klangluang* deposits helped the country repay its national debt of 1.4 trillion baht. Records show that past monarchs were beset by war, extreme weather, epidemics and other calamities but endured because they could utilize the ample reserve funds of the *Klangluang*. Detailed research reveals that the *Klangluang* is more than a repository of economic wealth, it is an indispensable partner in nation building; historically, it has been closely associated with the nation’s central institutions of Buddhism and the monarchy. The ancestors of the Thai people guarded it closely according to royal tradition and with deep respect for royal generosity as well as remembrance of those who sacrificed their lives to preserve the nation so the Thai people could live happily and peacefully to the present day. They enacted special laws intended to protect the *Klangluang* for posterity. The second part of the book describes the activities of **Luang Ta Maha Boowa Nyanasampanno**, a highly-revered Buddhist monk from the Forest Monastery of Barn Tard in Udon Thani, who on April 12, 1998 established the “Help the Nation Project” with **Her Royal Highness Princess Chulapornwalaik** as its President. The project aimed to encourage Buddhists throughout the nation to act in accordance with the Buddha’s teaching and to donate gold and foreign currency, placing them in what is formally known today as the “Currency Reserve Fund”. Luang Ta Maha Boowa Nyanasampanno, widely recognized for his penetrating insight and knowledge, understands that society is more complicated and unpredictable than in the past. Because of his compassion, Luang Ta has continually reminded Thais that they must protect and increase the wealth of the *Klangluang*, making it stronger, more stable, and safer. He has repeatedly stressed the importance of protecting the *Klangluang* from those who might try to subvert its original purpose. He, and others, regard the *Klangluang* as the last wall of defense against national collapse. For more than seven years, until he was in his early nineties, Luang Ta traveled ceaselessly the length and breadth of the kingdom, teaching the Dhamma of the Lord Buddha and collecting donations of gold and foreign currency to deposit in the *Klangluang*. The people’s faith in Luang Ta led them to give more than 11 tons of gold and over 10 million US dollars. The latter half of the book also details attempts by others to usurp control of the *Klangluang* by creating laws which contravene the aims of its founders. It ends with an explanation of Luang Ta’s motivation in creating the “Help the Nation Project” and how the principles of Dhamma can be used to remedy national problems. The compilers of this book sincerely hope that *“The Klangluang of Thailand”* will benefit both present and future Thai generations by enabling them to learn the history of the *Klangluang* and encourage them to bond together to protect it. In that manner, it will remain a vital bulwark for their nation and continue to serve as “auspicious insurance” for the nation’s security and well-being. It is also hoped that the book will encourage people to have faith in, and adhere to, the teachings of the Lord Buddha long into the future.

^[*] As Luang Ta Maha Boowa Nyanasampanno has been respected by many Buddhists from other nations, in Thailand and many countries around the world, this section of the book is intended to expand awareness and acquaint his non-Thai admirers about Dhamma of the Lord Buddha and Luang Ta’s continued efforts to help the Thai nation.