

# The Money Frog

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The association between money and amphibians is an ancient one. As the three-legged toad, *Chan Chu* receives a place of honour in Chinese-owned businesses and houses, the three-legged amphibian clenching in its mouth, a hollow-centred coin, while sitting on a pile of coins.

A tin- and lead-based currency was widely used by the Malacca Sultanates, between the 18th and 19th centuries over the central part of modern day Peninsular Malaysia (especially the states of Melaka, Perak and Selangor) and the Sumatran province of Palembang, in Indonesia. Reportedly influenced by magic and folklore, these were minted by the Pawang (or traditional medicine man) in the shape of animals to appease spirits. The value of these ingots was based on the amount of metal that could be exchanged for a Spanish silver dollar. One of relatively rare animal motif is that of the frog, here illustrated by three examples.

More contemporary coins have depicted frogs and toads (*Anura*) and salamanders and newts (*Caudata*). Examples of amphibian coins known include: Australia (KM#1726, 2012, 50 dollars, gold; catalogue numbers awaited 2012, 1 dollar, aluminium bronze; 15 dollars, platinum: *Litoria aurea*); Bermuda (KM#65, 1990, 2 dollars, silver: *Eleutherodactylus johnstonei*); Canada (catalogue numbers awaited, 2014, 25 cents and 20 dollars, silver: *Lithobates pipiens*); Colombia (KM#298, 2013, 500 pesos, aluminium-bronze in copper-nickel ring: *Centronella prosoblepon*); Fiji (KM#55, 1986, 10 dollars, silver: *Platymantis vitianus*); Latvia (KM#108, 2010, 1 lat, copper-nickel: *Bombina bombina*); Poland (Y#340, 1998, 2 zloty, nordic gold: *Epidalea calamita*; Y#343, 1998, 20 zlotych, silver: *Epidalea calamita*; unnumbered, 2013, 10 zlotych, brass: *Bombina bombina*; catalogue number awaited, 2009, 5 turtow, brass, *Triturus cristatus*); Palau (catalogue numbers awaited, 2011, 2 dollars, silver, *Atelopus certus* and 2013, 2 dollars, silver: *Litoria caerulea*); Puerto Rico (KM#519, 2012, 25 cents, copper-nickel: *Eleutherodactylus coqui*); Russia (Y#881, 2004, 1 rouble, silver: *Epidalea calamita*); Slovenia (KM#7, 1992, 10 stotinov, aluminium: *Proteus anguineus*) and Ukraine (KM#178, 2003, 2 hryvni, gold: *Salamandra salamandra*). In 2010, Malawi issued a set of 10 coloured silver-plated copper-nickel coins of denomination 10 Malawi Kwacha, featuring as many species of frogs. Additionally, a fantasy coin purportedly from Chechnya, a Republic of Russia, that was issued in 2012 and of 10 kopec value, shows an indeterminate frog species.