

## **Coins From India's Princely States Chapter One: Introduction**

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India is home to one of the oldest civilizations. Today it boasts a population of over 1.18 billion people. India has a rich history and with that comes a large variety of coins for collectors to fall in love with. Before talking about the coins of India, here is a very brief rundown of India's history.

The Indus Valley Civilization was one of the world's first great urban civilizations. It flourished in the vast river plains and adjacent regions in what are now Pakistan and western India. Evidence of inhabitants dates back as far as 6500 B.C. In 550 B.C. 16 independent kingdoms and republics known as the Mahajanapadas (Great Realms) were established across the country. By 269 B.C., India had been unified under Asoka the Great under the Maurya Dynasty. This included Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and Bangladesh. The dynasty ended in 180 BC and through foreign invasion and division, the [Middle Kingdoms of India](#) were established and thrived until further invasion at the end of the 12th century by Muslim armies. Various Muslim kingdoms struggled for control into the 19th century while European colonial presence began in the 16th century.

The Portuguese sailor Vasco da Gama was the first European to arrive in India by boat in 1498. Before long the Netherlands, France, Portugal, Denmark and Great Britain each had colonies set up throughout India and the region. Great Britain was able to win out among the other European colonies and by 1858 had dominated the region. At the time India was still not unified but divided among states known as Princely States.

These states were either under the dominion of the British Empire or were under suzerainty, which means that they maintained domestic autonomy but external affairs such as military, foreign affairs, and communications were under British control. There were as many as 568 states in India before the country achieved independence in 1947.

Over the next year CoinBrag will have frequent write-ups covering the coins of India's Princely States.