

Legendary Monkey King Featured on Stamps

The Inter-Governmental Philatelic Corp. recently orchestrated a mini-omnibus for some of its client nations on the subject of The Monkey King, more formally known as Sun Wukong. Recently popularized in a 2014 Hong Kong action film, the plot of the film is based on an episode of the 16th century Chinese classical novel, *Journey to the West*.

From Wikipedia, we learn that The Monkey King is a mythological figure who features in a body of legends, which can be traced back to the period of the Song dynasty, which ran from 960-1279. In the *Journey to the West* novel, he is a monkey born from a stone who acquires supernatural powers through Taoist practices. After rebelling against heaven and being imprisoned under a mountain by the Buddha, he later accompanies the monk Xuanzang on a journey to retrieve Buddhist sutras (ancient texts) from “the West”.

He possesses immense strength, able to lift his 17,550 pound staff with ease. He is also extremely fast, able to travel 13,468—half way around the world—in one somersault. He also can appear in 72 different transformations—although hindered by the incomplete transformation of his tail. Sun Wukong is a skilled fighter, capable of holding his own against the best warriors of heaven. Each of his hairs possess magical properties, capable of being transformed into clones of the Monkey



King himself, and/or into various weapons, animals, and other objects. He knows spells to command wind, part water, conjure protective circles against demons, and freeze humans, demons, and gods alike.

With his super-natural powers Sun Wukong, or The Monkey King, is a natural for an action movie. He also has been portrayed in numerous other media, and the IGPC-produced stamps depict him as seen in paintings (on an Antigua & Barbuda souvenir sheet) and in Chinese operas (on Tanzania sheetlets, one shown).

For more information on The Monkey King philatelic depictions, please go to the IGPC website, www.igpc.com.