

Tumi, A Flowery Cultural Symbol in Ancient China

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About 3000 years ago, the Chinese characters “蔷薇”(Qiangmi), the original words of Wild Rose in Chinese, had been listed among 151 plant species recorded in a well-known ancient book, *The Book of Songs*. From then, traditionally in China the plants in *Rosa* family were classified into three divisions. They are respectively Wild Roses(蔷薇, Qiangwei), circa 2000 years ago; Rugosa Roses(玫瑰, Meigui, Fig1), circa.2000 years ago; and Monthly Roses(月季, Yueji), circa 1300 years ago. Right now we Chinese still use the conventional classification and nomination in our rose field.

Monthly Roses emerged so abundantly and spread so widely in Song Dynasty that the peakedness was formed already. Among the Chinese old roses, there are mainly two groups that eventually altered the world rose way into Modern Rose time totally. As the representatives that have been known well in the west, they are Old Blush for Yueyuehong Group, derived from *Rosa chinensis*; Park's Yellow Tea-scented China for Odorata Group, originated from *R. odorata* var. *gigantea*. But another

group, the Bank Roses came from *R. bankisea*, also spread in the west widely,

However, in ancient Chinese traditional gardens, the most eminent and representative roses were not the ones mentioned above, but the Tumi(Fig.2). From Song Dynasty to present, the legacy of Tumi has been lasting over at the fewest one thousand years, gradually forming a unique flowery cultural symbol and phenomenon, influencing strongly people's appreciative interests. That is really a climber, climbing up over 10 meters, with the rare features of nearly ever-green in south part of China, 3-5 leaflets, white and double flower, born solitary almost, purplish-reddish pistils, and a light but lingering smell spreading far away.

In this presentation, I will show you the origin of Tumi, including its evolvement, identification both from the morphology and genetic experimental analysis, classification and correction, spreading route abroad, flowery culture, landscape configuration in public and private gardens, various new forms found as Tumi's parents, and so on. Finally, I will lift the veil and tell you what the Tumi is.

Tumi, a symbol flower of ancient Chinese culture, especially in Song Dynasty, has never gone far away. It might be flowering in your pretty garden, or just standing by your side (Fig.3). Of course, you can read much more in detail on Tumi in *Old Roses in China*, the book flattered as a complete book of Chinese old roses, just published by Science Press in

2015(Fig.4).



Fig.1 A variety of Rugaosa with double flower, painted by Quan Xuan (1239—1299) , at least 700 years ago



Fig.2 Tumi on the ancient Chinese traditional flowers and birds painting,

a scroll titled *one hundred flowers*, painted in Southern Song Dynasty, more than 700 years ago.



Fig.3 The existing rare Tumi, the best climber for corridor decoration in a Chinese traditional garden.

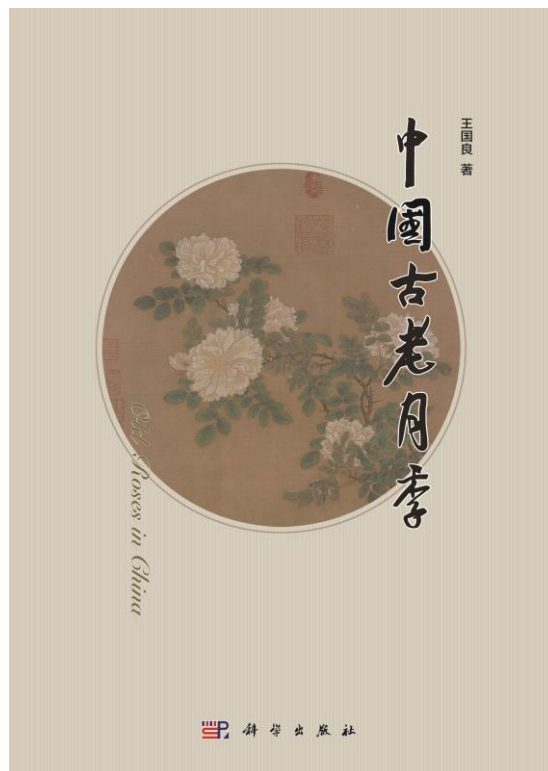


Fig.4 *Old Roses in China*, flattered abroad a complete book of Chinese old roses, all-coloured, 350 pages, over 200 varieties, 500 pictures.