



CHAPTER 4

IN SEARCH OF THE TRUE GOJI

Of all the species known as goji, researchers decided to concentrate their efforts only on those that came from the botanical family known as *Solanaceae*. They further narrowed their choices to include only the desert-thorns of the genus *Lycium* (lye-SEE-um).

Their choices were made from a historical perspective, based on descriptions of goji in ancient medical texts. In fact, goji was declared to be a superior herb as early as the first century A.D., when it was extolled in the *Divine Farmer's Handbook of Natural Medicine* (Shen Nong Ben Cao), perhaps the most important text in the history of Chinese medicine.

Interestingly, Tao Hong Jing (456-536 A.D.), a Taoist master, wrote a treatise called *Commentary on the Divine Farmer's Handbook of Natural Medicine*. Tao Hong Jing tells us that “*Lycium* tonifies *jing* (vital energy) and *qi* (breath) and strengthens the *yin tao* (capacity for physical exercise) within a human.”

Those early endorsements were so powerful that even to this day, people not only in China but all throughout Asia use the fruit of the *Lycium* goji plant as a potent anti-aging herb. Many who eat the berry or drink its juice every day will tell you of its history and legend. Most often, they will relate the tale of the most famous goji user of all time, Master Li Qing Yuen.