

The background of the page is a golden-yellow color with faint, stylized illustrations of ancient Egyptian figures and hieroglyphs. The figures are depicted in a traditional Egyptian style, with some holding staffs or objects. The hieroglyphs are arranged in vertical columns, typical of ancient Egyptian writing. The overall aesthetic is that of an ancient manuscript or a historical document.

Chapter 5
A Beer Story

Last Words

Once a young man from southeast Korea, the region famous for its strong accents, came up to the capital city of Seoul. In American terms, he would have sounded like a true hick. So when he saw a beautiful girl drawing water from a well, he took great care with good reason to talk only ‘Seoul’ talk (accent).

"Hello – Miss – would – you – be – so – kind – as – to – pour – me – glass – of – water? (Heidi, cannah git some of dat?)

He mimicked the Seoul talk he had heard of back home. She could have just given him the water, but this surly lady retorted,

"Whatever for?"

partly to tease him, and partly to mock. The young man was thrown back and burst out of panic,

" ‘Cuz awm tarred and thurstin’!"

It’s a familiar joke about dialects in Korea, which is almost impossible to translate. So, in English it is not that funny at all. But, once told in Korean, this joke never fails to receive a few nice chuckles.

Anyways, an unusual amount of scenes appear in Korean tales, myths, and history where a man and a woman can be found exchanging words at a well. Taejo Wangun and Yi Sungye, the first two kings—whose stories do not begin in mythology but in written history—shared their first conversations with their wives, Lady Oh and Lady Kang, in this way. A similar scene also appears in the biography of General Kim Yushin. In Korean tales, a scholar traveling to take the government exam always loses his way in the mountain just as the sun goes down, and then encounters

either a sobbing widow in her white morning dress or a maiden whose father has been unjustly killed. On the other hand, when the stories feature a warrior, they always begin with an unreserved conversation with a woman at a well during the daytime.



Boy and Girl at the Well

I thought this was rather odd ever since I was young, but I believe I have just recently solved this riddle. I realized that the conversations in all the stories follow one stereotypical model. Without exception, the blushing (?) lady of the well plucks a leaf from the willow tree and uses it to give the warrior his water. The man then always asks why she uses a leaf and the lady answers, "You shall choke if you drink too fast." To this the warrior

exclaims, "My lady's wisdom marvels me!" Myths and tales relating the exact same event must have been told repeatedly for ages. However, each time a conversation between a man and a woman at a well is depicted, the hero still pretends to not know the deep significance that lies beneath the plucking of the willow leaf. Maybe he was too busy studying literature, medicine, and geography to hear any of the stories... Moving on, the relationship that begins this way progresses at full speed ahead to four or five hours later that night, when the man and woman have sexual relations. And the hero's new father-in-law is invariably a great landowner of ample wealth who later becomes a critical source of strength when the hero establishes his own kingdom. It seems that maidens at wells in Korean tales play out the role retained by the Spider Woman in Native American tales. A goddess who bestows protection and grace to the hero at the beginning of his adventure... she can not be found in no other place but at the well.

The well in Korean tales was certainly a place where men and women could freely romance each other. The man would ask the woman of his choice for some water, the woman would pluck a leaf from the willow tree as a token of her own affection, and the two would quickly jump into marital bliss once their feelings were confirmed, all in accordance with the excessively standard formula. In ancient societies, the only opportunity young women had to leave the house unaccompanied by neither her parents nor a male relative was to go draw water from the well. So naturally the well became the place where conversation, incidents, history, romance, and adventure could begin between a man and a woman in ancient worlds.

In the tales and myths of nomadic desert tribes set in an oasis, the well is not the place for courtship, but the sight of vicious arguments over property and residential rights.



Oasis

The scene where Moses meets his wife is an exemplary case of this. You can observe how scenes that feature a well in Middle Eastern stories contain elements of conflict and

violence. Korean stories with wells contain no such feuds but are simply amusing and make you chuckle in spite of yourself. They make you want to poke fun at the characters, ("Yeah, you just want to get her number, don't you?") and the main female characters of the stories are always cute and naïve, blushing until even their ears turn red. The well-side stories from the Bible, however, are not so dainty. Jesus does share a famous conversation with a woman by a well, but it is not at all a dialogue of affection. It was a dialogue of confrontation and theological arguments that start with the exposure of marital stigmas.

There is another point where the well stories of Korea and the Middle East differ. In Korean tales, it is the woman who bestows the "water" unto the man, while in the Middle East it is the man who gives water or he helps the woman draw water out of the well. Furthermore, Jesus teaches the woman at the well how the water of life (Aqua Vitae) will burst like a river from the belly.

So that is the case with Korean and Middle Eastern tales. But as I have said before, the well-side discussion is a common element shared by the stories from all over the world, and in comparative mythology, this element is called the "Ultimate Boon."

The hero leaves his ordinary life behind and endures suffering and tribulation to reach the center of the universe, the World Navel. At this center, the Axis Mundi connects the earth and sky, and from the roots of this tree is the Well of Wisdom from where the Water of Forgetfulness flows out. The gods revel around this Well of Wisdom and the hero sees the gods drinking the Water of Forgetfulness that is also the Water of Wisdom. Before the gods can notice, the hero steals this water and bestows it as a boon to the rest of humanity.

Of course, 'boon' and 'booza' share the same etymology. As I have mentioned before, 'booza' was an Ancient Egyptian term that referred to beer. In Greek mythology, the gods lounge around a World Navel called Olympus and enjoy their days drinking (or eating) Ambrosia. The god Wotan holds festivities in a mountain that is the Northern European equivalent of Olympus, and drinks the blood of a bear named Sackrinnir and the milk of Heidrun, a goddess with the body of a goat. Obviously, the

bear's blood signifies beer.¹ Beer is a symbol of the struggle with an enemy we used to fight against, but has since been conquered. It symbolizes the conquest over the uncertainty of life, the necessary trials and difficulties that spring up here and there as we run through life, and limitations of human faculties. This is why beer symbolizes the celebration of "us," a victory in the midst of life's hardships.

The goat's milk is an obvious symbol of the Cornucopia,² or opulence. It represents richness during hardship, or rather, a type of richness called hardship. Not the kind of richness that comes from being a Rockefeller, or from winning the lottery, but more so the maturation and wisdom that can be obtained only through a long and tiresome journey of suffering. In Japanese mythology, the gods must be offered 'sake' for the 'Matsuri (Festival)' to properly commence. So to begin in earnest the festival—the Japanese version of the Messianic Banquet that gods and humans may take part in—sake must be presented to the gods. The word 'sake' itself originally means to 'offer.' Hence the



Cornucopia



Japanese Matsuri

¹ In Irish mythology, the prince of a desolate island (Loneisle) a pig, the symbol of evil, and afterwards drinks a beer called 'Guibne.' This story also has the same meaning.

² A cup made from the horn of the goat that nursed Zeus. It is a symbol that often appears in Western paintings and sculpture as holding an overflowing abundance of all sorts of fruits. For this reason, all cups are made in the shape of an extracted horn.

word 'sasake (sacrificial offering)' comes about.

In Persia, where Zoroastrianism once had a popular run, the gods would drink a beverage called Haoma that flowed underneath a World Tree called Hara. The Polynesian gods drank a similar drink that came from a similar mountain. The beverage that the Polynesians drink is clearly beer, and it is called "Abae" that is very similar to the word "beer." "Abae" is actually the Latin equivalent of "Hurrah!" In Aztec mythology, it is human blood that the gods drink. Here, a blood covenant is symbolically formed between god and us where I drink your blood, and you drink mine. Odin of Northern European mythology drinks the Water of Forgetfulness from the Well of Wisdom—in other words, beer—but instead of his blood, he bestows wisdom upon the human race wisdom, the Ultimate Boon...

Countless legends, myths, and folk tales from around the globe sing about how the confirmation of friendship through drinking beer is an emblem of the pledge between gods and men to share their blood with each other. On my own part, I have tried to compose a humble melody with this book that could accompany the "wonderful songs of beer" that the gods sing to us.



Celebration

Reference Materials

For those of you who want to further your own studies on beer, I would like to recommend some places where you could begin.

- 1) **Stephen Harrod Buhner, *Sacred and Herbal Healing Beers: The Secrets of Ancient Fermentation*, Boulder, Colorado: Siris Books, an imprint of Brewers Publications, 1998.**

This is a book that is accepted as the Bible among beer producers. If you ask all the proud and secretive brewers in North America, "What kind of books have you read?" almost every single one will mention this book. For reference, it is a book published by Siris Books, and 'Siris' was the daughter of Ninkashi, the Sumerian goddess of beer.³ So it is said that beer was called 'Siris' by Sumerians as a result.⁴ It is also said that the first successful product of the American movement to recreate ancient beers was called Ninkashi. Anyways, this is a very intellectual book. There are proofs here and there that make it clear that the author is a knowledgeable scholar deeply involved in an established field of study at a certain major university. The book must have been written by a great scholar... it is my guess that he

³ The name means "a woman who fills my mouth." If you read Psalm 81:10 in the Bible, the Israelites sing "Open wide your mouth and I will fill it" immediately after they regain their identity through the Exodus. It is another sign that the maturation into an adult is definitely related to beer. The song "My cup floweth over" appears so frequently in the Bible that you can hardly count exactly how many times it is sung. Wine was never poured to overflow the cup. The drink that is poured to overflow is undoubtedly beer. "You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows." If no other song is more fitting to a celebration that congratulates the boys who have just received the rights to hunt, to fight in war, and to marry; what other beverage could possibly be present besides beer? The Psalm 23 that begins, "The Lord is my shepherd..." is one that is sung at Jewish funerals, and is the most commonly engraved verse on Christian tombstones. To drink any other alcohol besides beer at funerals is against biblical philosophy, and also a form of idolatry... (I hope that you take this in as a silly comment that is made only half seriously and half in jest.)

⁴ In Egyptian mythology also, the goddess Isis bestows "bread water" to human souls through her son Osiris. "Bread water" obviously signifies beer. It hardly needs any explanation that the name 'Osiris' came from the Sumerian word 'Siris.' The beer god was one of the trinities in ancient mythologies.

uses a pen name for this book. Not only must this anonymous writer be quite a scholar, I also believe that he must be someone who takes a lot of pride in his erudition. It is a book about which Chinese would say that the author "has pierced through both covers of ten thousand books," and it is a freely virtuoso performance of the genius' expert command of many academic territories. It is a work that I truly admire. In particular, the author kindly tells his readers about places where they can purchase good ingredients on page 479, and it was by collecting the data mentioned on this page that I started to study beer in earnest. Especially the introduction of Mikal Assved and the world's first official publication of Tantric Buddhism's secrets to brewing beer can be called nothing but a great and worthy contribution.

2) Charlie Papazian, *The Home Brewer's Companion*, New York: Avon Books, 1994.

This is a book you can read if you want to gain a little bit of practical expertise on brewing beer. Papazian is actually a very famous person. While Buhner's work plainly reveals the established intellect of the author no matter how he tries to conceal it, Papazian enthusiastically reveals the knowledge learned for himself from one real battle to battle. It is probably the most helpful book when it comes to actually brewing beer. The book is especially imperative because it pretty much lines up all of the problems that can arise while making beer, and discusses causes and solutions through diagrams. Although it is titled, *The Home Brewer's Companion*, it is actually widely read by brewmasters of renowned beer firms as well.

3) Joe Fisher & Dennis Fisher, *The Homebrewer's Garde*, Vermont: Storey Books, 1998.

This is a book read by the truly orthodox brewers of beer. It discusses which ingredients do not properly release their taste when bought from stores, and how to cultivate at home the ingredients that can not be bought legally. There are many cases where brewers grow hop in their gardens themselves. Hop growers typically end up planting marijuana also. I also grow hop in

my garden, but do not grow any marijuana.

4) Brian Kunath, *Fearless Brewing: The Beer Maker's Bible*, Willowdale, Ontario: Firefly Books, 1998.

You can call it an introduction to brewing beer. The book contains such tantalizing pictures of beer and automatically lures the reader into the world of beer. If I were to write and publish a book without having to think about expenses, it would be a book like this one.

5) Allen Winn Sneath, *Brewed in Canada: The Untold Story of Canada's 350 Year Old Brewing Industry*, Toronto, Ontario: Dundurn Press, 2001.

A book that could not have been made unless the writer truly loved beer. My decision to write my own book about beer stemmed from the experiences that I had while reading this book. Sneath enjoyed drinking beer and went on to help with the advertising and sales of a beer company before starting his own firm. I wonder if he and I are walking along the same path. People tend to joke that he and I look alike. I still don't know if they meant it as a compliment or as an insult... Sneath reconstructs the history of Canada around beer, and clearly retains a sharp knowledge of both history and economics, as well as include narratives of beer that have been painstakingly investigated. It is a book written not for the sake of publication, but because of an innate affection for the subject.

6) Kim Chung, *The Story of the Glass Bottle and Its Cork*, DoSeo Publications PoJang Industry, 2000.

A book that approaches the subject of beer through the point of view of packaging. I have heard that experts in one field can easily master other fields as well, and reading this book truly verifies this saying. There is really a lot to learn from the comments that this packaging expert makes about beer.

7) Alexandre Lacroix, *Alcohol and Artists* (as translated by Baek Sun Hee), Maeum Sanchaek, 2002.

There was of period of two to three years when I was infatuated with French literature and so I know very well how there are no decent Korean translations of French books. Sometimes entire pages will be lost in the translation. (This happens especially often with the books of Michel Foucault. I am always amazed by the supernatural abilities people have that allow them to conduct lengthy debates after having read these questionable translations.) But this translation is done thoroughly. It can stand by itself as a worthy Korean book. My only qualm with this book is that it centers on wine. Also, Lacroix, obviously a Catholic, analyzes wine and beer as conflicting elements. Whether it is an unfortunate misunderstanding or a slight misconception however, I am only thankful that such a person exists. Anyways, Lacroix relates beer and wine in the artificial dichotomy shared between Gambrinus and Bacchus, and Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. But beer is actually not a very prosperous item in Catholic areas. The ‘Corona’ beer of Mexico, and the ‘San Miguel’ of the Philippines are two beers that are popular in Catholic regions, but don’t even come close to the beers that are popular in Protestant regions. He seemed like a promising young man who would have had very bright prospects if he had just set his work in the right direction... Personally, I feel a little regretful... but it is a good book nevertheless.

Although I have not read it myself, I heard that up to a hundred years ago, *Theoretical Hints On An Improved Practice of Brewing* written by John Richardson in 1777 was considered the bible for beer brewers. It probably won’t be that helpful as it was written before Pasteur founded the modern beer theory, but the book would probably be a nice piece for your collection if you can afford it. Also, Byron Burch’s *Brewing Quality Beers* (Joby Books, 1993) is a book that once swept up the awards of the American Beer Society. The beer masters I know collectively and seriously voice that, "It is a book that gave me strength every time I succumbed to exhaustion and despair, and gave me strength to walk the path of beer."⁵

Although it is not a book about beer, I still recommend *The Hero with*

a Thousand Faces (Joseph Campbell, Princeton University Press, Princeton NJ, 1968.) A scholar like Joseph Campbell is a superb teacher and genius that could only have come out of a great civilization like America, and he was the first to organize the pattern of heroes in mythology and to popularize the field. One of the reasons that America is a powerhouse nation is not because of the excessive amount of nuclear weapons it retains, but it is far more critical that the US is a country that can claim such geniuses like this as its citizens. Anyways, famous Hollywood producers and directors who had come in contact with Campbell's teachings would argue about who could have him for dinner, and who could have him over for a few days. George Lucas was the lucky one. Afterwards he became profoundly inspired by the conversations with him and go on to produce movies with new ideas. The blockbuster hits that were influenced by Joseph Campbell were 'Star Wars' and the first 'Rambo.' I admire the greatness of a superpower like America that can produce such an amazing genius. I also have to esteem the movie producers who not only recognized the depth of this mind and become moved by it, but also went on to use this veneration to make movies and collect billions of dollars.

Furthermore, there is a school called the American Brewer's Guild: Brewing School. You can go to this school if you don't want to manage an entire beer factory, but want to just work at one instead. If you are interested, you can register for courses introduced at www.abgbrew.com. The first course to take is a Correspondence course, and then a course in field practice. There are two to three courses that last a few months every year, that each result in an official degree at completion.

⁵ Americans have the pleasant habit of stylishly exalting over even small trifles. (It can also be a bad habit from time to time.) But it is true that beer masters have all gathered their opinions to praise this book.

