

Everyday Temple Chant in South Korean Chogye Sect Buddhism: An Analytical Study of the Personal Styles Cultivated by Monks

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INTRODUCTION

PERPETUATING the ancient traditions, teachings, and practices of Sōn Buddhism (equivalent to Zen in Japan and Chan in China), the Chogye sect is by far the largest Buddhist sect in South Korea. It currently administers around 1700 temples scattered across the country, mostly inhabited exclusively by male monks but many being all-female and a tiny minority being mixed. These temples range in size from just a few buildings run by a single resident monk to huge complexes; see Illustrations 1 and 2 below. Most temples are situated on the edges of communities, while others are right in the heart. For example, Jogyesa [Chogyesa], where the sect's administrative offices are based, is in downtown Seoul. All temples are open to visitors and most foster a community of devotees—people who attend the services that are most significant to the Buddhist calendar and, in some cases, drop by to participate in the daily services, pray by themselves in one of the temple's halls, or chat with a monk.



Illustrations 1 and 2. Two Chogye temples of very different sizes: Podōksa (left), with prayer hall on the left and two-room living quarters for a single resident monk on the right; and Tongdosa [T'ongdosa] (right), one of the sect's Three Jewel Temples (*sambo sach'al*). Photographs: the authors, 2012 (left), and public domain (right).

In larger temples, three services are held every day: the dawn praise service (*ach'im yebul*), waking up and protecting the community and calling for enlightenment for all beings; the morning service (*sashi pulgong*), making offerings to the Buddha; and the evening praise service (*chönyöck yebul*), ending the day with prayers. In smaller temples, only one or two of these are held. The services usually take place in the main hall (*taeunjön*), and the text is articulated entirely through the medium of Buddhist chant (*yömbul*), led by a single monk in smaller temples and by a few monks in bigger temples. As one monk put it: “Buddhist chant forms the heart of our ritual process.” When you enter the hall at the set time, you pick up a book of texts, grab a cushion to sit on, take your position, and work your way through—chanting in sync with the monk whenever they are marking out pulses on the hand-held wooden bell (*mokt'ak*), listening during the monk's solo passages (accompanied by a hand-held bell, *yoryöng*), and bowing a great many times.

For the most part, the services involve chanting sutras, with two almost always included: the Thousand Hand Sutra (Ch'önsugyöng), centering on the Great Compassion Dhāraṇī (Shinmyo changgu taedarani, Nīlakaṇṭha Dhāraṇī) and closely associated with Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Kwanūm in Korean); and the Heart Sutra (Panyashimgyöng, Prajñāpāramitāhṛdaya). Sometimes the officiating monk may also single out passages from other lengthier sutras, such as the Diamond Sutra (Kūmganggyöng, Vajracchedikā Prajñāpāramitā Sūtra) and the Flower Garland Sutra (Hwaömggyöng, Avataṃsaka Sūtra). The texts are articulated in a variety of languages: Sino-Korean (Chinese characters pronounced in the Korean way); Koreanized Sanskrit (representing the Buddha's ‘actual words’, *chinön*, believed to have been handed down through the millennia); and, increasingly, in modern Korean (since 2011). In addition, services feature episodes of praise song (*yebul*), “conveying our words to the Buddha rather than the Buddha's words to us” (as one monk pithily explained it), and repetitive mantra chanting (*chönggün*), where the community repeatedly chants a short phrase over and over—the name of a Buddha, Bodhisattva, or other sainted being.

Given the prevalence of these practices, the paucity of research investigating them is surprising. Although there are now over 50 studies addressing Korean Buddhist music, almost all focus exclusively on the celebrated forms fostered by a tiny minority of monks mainly within the T'aego sect—specifically, *pömp'ae* melismatic chant (for example, Im Misön 2009 and Yun Sohüi 2016) and the UNESCO intangible heritage-designated Yöngsanjae ceremony (for example, Hong Yunshik 2005 and Kim Ŭngi 2012). Beyond

that, there are studies examining Buddhist-themed songs in popular idioms (*hwach'öng* or *hwoeshimgok*; for example, Yi Pohyöng 2013 and No Myöngyöl 2014) and relationships with Buddhist forms in other countries (for example, Yun Sohüi 2009). The small number of English-language studies addressing Korean Buddhist music exhibit the same exclusive focus on *pömp'ae*—this being the case, for example, for Byong Won Lee's analytical works (1977, 1983, and 1987). Despite Kim Yöngun's call for a more inclusive, un-elitist approach to studying Korean Buddhist music (2010), only a handful of studies shed light on the standard chant (*p'yöng yömbul*) practiced by the majority of monks. However, even these publications are very restricted in their focus: Yi Hyöngwan examines the praise song “Ch'iljöngnae” (“seven high praise offerings”), which is generally included within the morning daily service (2009), and Kim Yöngun analyses the chant patterns used in the Three Jewel Temples, Haeinsa, Songgwangsa, and Tongdosa (2008, 2010). So, one is left in the dark about the chant that is conducted on a daily basis within the Chogye sect's numerous other temples. This aspect of living Korean culture has evidently been taken for granted and overlooked. In this article we aim to address this lacuna in the study of Korean Buddhist music head on by presenting a detailed comparative analysis of how 30 different monks intone the same texts, as encountered by the authors in 30 different Chogye sect temples.

Long before embarking on this project, we had often been struck by how different each monk's chanting sounded in respect to all parameters—timbre, ornamentation, modes, melodic patterns, rhythms, and tempi—and our research has since confirmed that the Chogye sect does indeed accommodate a great diversity of approaches. The patterns documented by Kim Yöngun (2008, 2010) in the Jewel Temples cannot be considered typical or representative. Rather than leave this observation about diversity hanging, we complement our analysis of chant patterns with an investigation into how it comes to be that the monks chant like they do. We present the monks' own explanations regarding the objectives of chanting, the qualities that render chant effective, their methods of learning, and the processes through which they end up forging their own chanting idiolects. Here, we build upon an earlier study where we posit a cross-culturally applicable model of how personal music styles are developed (Mills and Park 2017). To assess these matters, we rely on the testimonies of the monks themselves. Unfortunately, very few (if any?) of the existing studies give voice to monks' recollections and interpretations, or acknowledge that the monks can and do exercise independent personal choice in their lives and ritual practices.

Our research is primarily based on ethnography. In 2019, funded by the Academy of Korean Studies (AKS 2019-R31), we spent nine weeks travelling around all eight mainland provinces of Korea, visiting 42 temples, comprising a mixture of big temples (16 of the 25 head temples) and smaller temples (both downtown and rural, including nine all-female). We visited others as well but, in those cases, we were not permitted to make recordings or speak to monks; they have thus been omitted from our study. The locations of the 42 temples are indicated in Figure 1.

Our experiences varied from one temple to the next. We were generally not permitted to take photos or videos of services but were allowed to make audio recordings while participating in the rituals, for our own study purposes and with the assurance that we would not make the recordings publicly available. As several monks noted, many devotees in fact make audio recordings to aid in their own studies. Most of the officiating monks were happy to talk to us—in conversations ranging in duration from five minutes to many hours—though we were sometimes obliged to write in a notebook as we chatted rather than audio record the conversation. In all cases, our questions sought to elicit the monks' learning experiences, their interpretations regarding chant's functions, and the qualities thought to make chant effective.

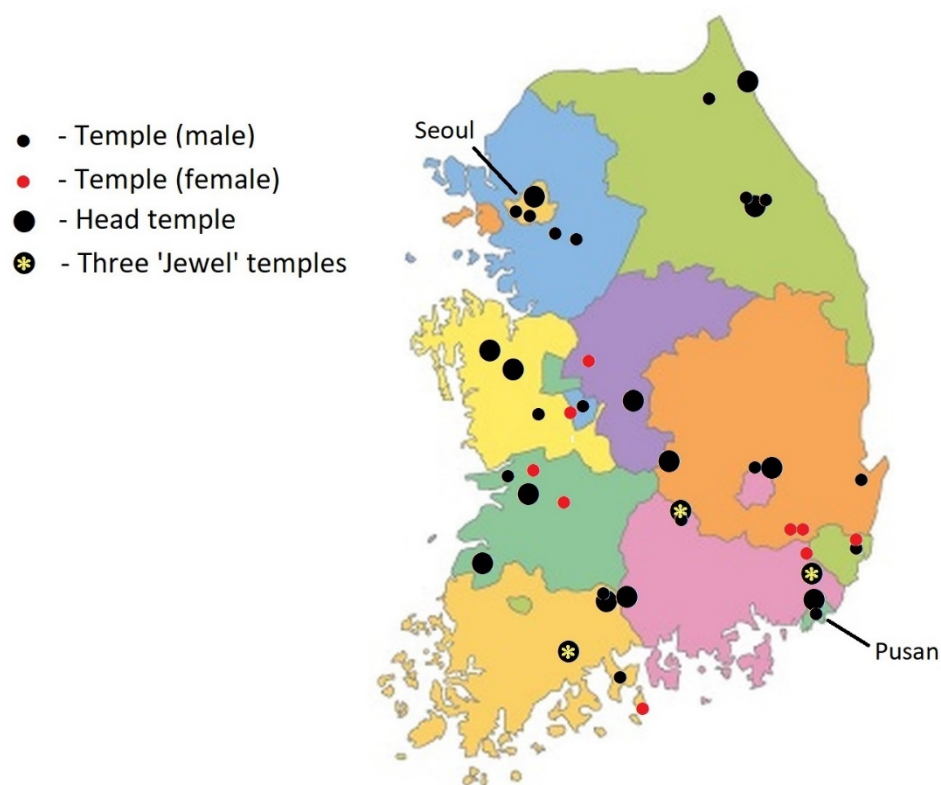


Figure 1. Map showing the locations of the 42 temples visited.

Most monks requested anonymity so, for consistency, we have anonymized them all, referring to them by number instead: M1–M42. In almost all cases, we also avoid linking the individual monks and their chant styles to specific named temples. This is partly because itinerancy remains a defining feature of Chogye sect culture, with monks tending not to stay in the same temple for more than a few years before relocating elsewhere, and partly because it is only the largest temples, like Haeinsa and Songgwangsa, that maintain their own temple-specific chant styles (demonstrated by M7 and M9 respectively). For the musical analysis itself, rather than ‘cherry pick’ monks exhibiting especially contrasting styles, we aim to provide a comprehensive and detailed picture of the stylistic diversity we encountered. Accordingly, we focus on 30 different monks from our sample (M1–M30); this is the full number for whom we have cross-comparable data—the exact same passages of text being chanted in a daily service.

Before turning to our analysis of the chant’s musical properties, it is essential first to examine the monks’ conceptions regarding the functions and attributes of chant. What are they aiming to achieve through their chanting? And, stemming from that, what particular qualities are they wishing to imbue their chant with, in the understanding that they will render it effective?

THE ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS OF BUDDHIST CHANT

Constituting the core of the daily service, chanting is intended to “turn the focus of one’s heart (*shim*) towards certain thoughts and actions” (M31), with heart (*shim*) here understood in the usual Buddhist sense as a heart/mind composite. Being mainly congregational, chanting is thought to promote both a harmonious heart (*hwashim*) within the individual and also a state of one-heartedness (*ilshim*) among all, sometimes evoking powerful experiences of transcendence.¹ One esteemed old monk explained these experiences by resorting to unusually poetic language while also, like many monks, professing profound reservations regarding the limitations of language:

When you hear people chanting . . . you’re actually hearing ‘life’s song’ . . .
When you experience that with your whole being, your body starts working gracefully, with water flowing and flowers blooming . . . Hearing the sublime (*sunggo*) words being sung by lots of people together in one voice,

¹ Of course, such processes have been explored in countless other participative rituals around the globe, often applying and building upon theories such as Victor Turner’s *communitas* ([1969] 2017).

you hear the voices, in turn, also become sublime—and then you can feel your eternal life force and you become sated with love’s happiness . . . You can’t explain it. You have to experience it. (M32)

During episodes of repetitive mantra-chanting (*chönggŭn*), the experience of being subsumed within a harmonious community is especially intense (see Kim Yongtae 2015).² Here, one perceives the co-existence of diverse active agents, each with their distinctive character, constitution, identity, and tastes, and each pursuing their own path but, crucially, all holding the same goal of enlightenment: “There is diversity and independence and constant change but now we realize that we are linked in ‘one heart’ (*ilshim*) . . . It is all about achieving that state of one-heartedness: that is the essence of harmony.” (M28)

Meanwhile, the Buddhist paintings (*t’aenghwa*) adorning the hall’s walls accentuate this impression of a coming-together of diverse individuals. The painting above the altar of the saintly community (*shinjungdan*), in particular, typically depicts a fantastic array of individuals from diverse cultures and religions, looking well beyond the most immediate realms of Mahayana Buddhism (M18; see also Sorenson 2011).

In addition, chant is understood as a vocal or choral offering (*ŭmsöng* or *hapch’angdan kongyang*) to the Buddha, working alongside other offerings (*kongyang*) like rice, incense, and prayers as a means for accruing both blessings (*chabi*) and wisdom (*chihye*). From the monks’ perspective, chant is also a tool for providing guidance (*chae*) to others—hence the designation of major Buddhist rituals as “*jae*” (for example, *Yöngsanjae*) as opposed to the “*je*” employed for Confucianist rituals (M24).

In accordance with my beliefs as a monk, rather than focus on trying to be seen in a favorable light, my concern is with nurturing the heart: if someone in difficulty comes with a sincere heart, I can’t give money to them, but I can help through giving Buddhism . . . That’s a big desire for me: thoughts of wanting to help arise in my heart when I chant. (M26)

This helping role is evidently directed towards all beings, not just the living. As one monk put it: “We aim to bring enlightenment to all beings to be born again in paradise through communicating the Buddha’s words and giving understanding, also to the spirits

² See also Pi-yen Chen’s incisive studies into closely related chanting practices within Chinese monastic tradition: 2001, 27–37; 2004.

and ghosts who are truly afraid of the light” (M24). So, as another monk explained: “When chanting in the ritual hall, I’m aware of all who are listening, both the living people and the spirits” (M33).

We were often told that chanting requires “much more than simply emitting sound” (M34). Rather, through study, one must “carve the meaning into one’s heart”—a commonly used metaphor amongst the monks (for example, M34, M24, and M4). Then, while chanting, one must ruminate upon that meaning single-mindedly and with whole-hearted devotion, so “the full meaning and emotion is loaded into the sound and carried over to the listener, whose heart is then moved” (M4). These extra measures help ensure that the all-important content can be apprehended by people with limited knowledge and understanding of the complex texts and with “scattered hearts” (*hūt’ōjin maŭm*) full of distractions. The importance of “thinking about” the text’s full import while chanting is conveyed by the term “*yōmbul*” itself, where “*yōm*” means “thought” and “*bul*” means “Buddha.”

As the word “*yōmbul*” indicates, the monks’ primary focus when chanting is the internal dimension. Above and beyond all other functions, chanting is conceived as a form of spiritual discipline (*subaeng*). Both within the monastery and beyond, all activities, experiences, and thoughts are approached as vehicles towards enlightenment (see also Buswell 1993, 3–20 and 217–223):

Ultimately, it’s all about the heart (*shim*) for us Buddhists. Whether one is chanting, studying texts, meditating, or whatever, it’s all done with exactly the same central concern: cultivating the heart. (M27)

One esteemed monk based in a remote mountain monastery summed up the essential objectives of all forms of spiritual discipline as follows:

[The historical Buddha’s] great realization was that all beings, even the smallest insects, have their own original perfect Buddha nature within them. We love, hate, become jealous, get greedy, harbor envy. Dirt accumulates in our clean hearts through delusions. But through continuous chanting, meditation, or other methods, any being can make that heart empty and realize their Buddha nature. (M35)

This monk then went on to explain, as many others did, that the same two mutually intertwined processes lie at the core of all spiritual disciplines, including chant:

observation (*kwanch'al*) and concentration (*chipjung*) (see Kusan Sunim 1985, 59–72 and Buswell 1983, 238–374). To help us understand, the monk then suggested we visit the stream flowing beside the temple:

Up here, the stream water is the best. Try sitting next to it for 30 minutes. Observe and concentrate solely upon the water sound, letting all your stresses and delusions go, and just listen to the water sound as it is—the way it flows into and out of you. Where is your true 'I', your original pure Buddha nature? . . . Observation (*kwanch'al*) isn't just watching; rather it's the '*kwan*' of Bodhisattva Kwansaeüm [the one who observes the sounds of the world]. (M35)

Another monk, who had once been a school teacher, alluded to how children use microscopes at school to observe tiny creatures moving:

Although we have five senses, at that particular moment, you're using just one eye in the most concentrated fashion. '*Kwan*' observation is that kind of process. (M27)

As some monks stated, this observational process should ideally be non-judgmental, recognizing qualities as they are without measuring them against an ideal. Many of the temples we visited had noisy construction work taking place near the main hall or tourists milling around. Nevertheless, the officiating monks would typically state that they did not perceive the extraneous sounds as an irritation, and several even claimed to recognize a state of harmony between the disparate elements:

Loads of people come here and it's really noisy. Plus, they're busily doing construction work right outside . . . 50,000 different sounds! But I always hear them all and I don't hear any of them as irritating. In the Lotus Sutra [Pöphwagyöng, Saddharma Puṇḍarīka Sūtra], it says: no matter what the sound is, if you do observation, opening yourself up to perceiving sounds as they are, none of them will ever cause interference . . . And certain devotees chant really loudly because they have such devoted hearts. At first, I'd experience a flare-up of anger . . . but now I've come to hear it differently. (M27)

Chanting is considered an unusually effective form of spiritual discipline because it demands concentrated observation and full awareness in the present moment: one must

listen attentively to the whole sound (considering one's own and others' contributions), accurately recall extensive memorized material (or carefully read from a book for less familiar texts), and vocalize with sufficient skill to facilitate coordination in thought and behavior. In Sōn Buddhism, *hwadu* are extensively employed—short questions and statements designed to stimulate deep realization (see, for example, Buswell 1983). However, whereas one's mind can easily lapse away from a *hwadu* when undertaking *hwadu*-focused meditation, the chanter has to retain focused concentration:

If other thoughts spark up just for an instant, you can go down a wrong path and it can be hard to find your place again. So, you are forced to devote your mind to the one thing. (M20)

Of course, chanting also encourages single-pointed concentration when undertaken alone, so many monks and devotees regularly chant by themselves outside of collective ritual. When unimpeded by others, rapid chanting is often preferred because it “demands still more concentration and focus and leaves smaller gaps within which miscellaneous thoughts can arise” (M36). When chanting as a spiritual discipline (*subaeng*), the ultimate goal is to evoke a state of perfectly controlled deep concentrated focus undisturbed by ego-generated thought or emotion: *sammae* (Sanskrit: *samādhi*) (see, for example, Shankman 2008).

What we call ‘*sammae*’ isn't easy to explain because it's something that you alone experience bodily . . . It's like licking the outside of a watermelon: even if you lick it 100 times, you can't know the taste. You have to cut it open and eat the red inner flesh. (M1)

Although chanting is treated by monks as a tool for cultivating the heart, it is often treated rather differently by devotees—specifically, as a vehicle for delivering personal prayers outwardly towards a Buddha or Bodhisattva, conceived as an independent external super-human agent. As one monk explained:

[During the service] they chant with the utmost earnestness, offering up prayers to the Buddha for the fortunes of their husbands, offspring, and so on. It's an unavoidable condition of the heart to look for help outside of oneself. But there's something that these people don't really understand. In our monks' analysis, because we are all Buddhas, the power to realize things is already there within ourselves. It's not that the Buddha or . . . Bodhisattvas

are giving us things. Rather, it's all thanks to the Buddhas within ourselves.
(M35)

THE ESSENTIAL ATTRIBUTES OF BUDDHIST CHANT

With the above-mentioned objectives and understandings in mind, the monks we spoke to identified a number of attributes as key facilitators for fully engaged, effective chant.

First, one must apply Great Determination and Great Faith regarding Buddhism's central tenets and spiritual disciplines.³ Not only does "chanting with sincerity (*chinshim*) and devotion (*shinshim*) enable you to connect with the Buddha's words" (M37); it also ensures that one's chant becomes imbued with the power to influence. As one esteemed monk put it: "Only if you fully believe will people perceive the chanting sound as truly beautiful and have their hearts moved" (M31). However, it was invariably asserted that the sonic manifestations of devotion vary from individual to individual, and the ensuing analysis confirms this: while some monks favor slow majestic delivery, others prefer a steadfastly rapid pace; while some add swells of volume or vibrato (suggesting a welling up and release of emotion), others voice the purest, most unornamented sounds possible; and while some use minimal melodic material, others bring a large palette of melodic patterns into play.

Second, one should not over-complicate one's chant or stray too far from expectations: "From our perspective, we think that if the followers can easily follow what the monks are doing, then that's ideal" (M34). As the ensuing analysis will show, a wide range of modes, patterns, ornaments, and tempi may be employed. However, there are of course boundaries of stylistic acceptability and comprehensibility: the chant's various attributes should "make sense" and be applied consistently, enabling attendees to apprehend the inherent logic quickly and blend in without "sparking off" (*t'wida*) (M1). Here, the commonly employed verb "sparking off" evocatively describes the effect when someone fails to match the pulse or produces pitches and patterns overtly deviating from those of the officiating monk.

³ We encountered no mentions of the third "Great" in connection with chanting, namely "Great Doubt"; see Sungbae Park 1983, 67.

Third, the words, rhythms, and pitches should be articulated with precision and at sufficient volume to enable synchronization: “If it’s too quiet and relaxed, the feeling of devotion doesn’t arise; it just makes everyone sleepy” (M20). In larger temples, where monastic life takes on a strictly regimented militaristic character (see Buswell 1993), the chant leader often “takes on the role of the platoon leader,” having to “put lots of energy (*kiun*) into it” (M38). Nevertheless, the chanting should never feel forced:

Because chant is an act of devotion . . . everything must be easy and comfortable . . . One’s breath must be comfortable and deep. When meditating, you breath in deeply through the nose into the spiritual centre (*tanjön*). Chanting is the same. If you breath [like that], you can chant all day and it won’t be difficult. You don’t lose energy (*ki*) and, in fact, your energy accumulates . . . And your voice comes out more magnificently, getting better and better. (M25)

Fourth, by skillfully applying techniques (*kigyō*), one can attract and sustain people’s concentration, stimulating devotional sentiment. As one monk put it: “you have to use your sound to grab [people]; just the same as when you’re making music, you need to ensure that the chanting has some power of attraction” (M39). Another monk provided further elucidation: “If you vary the patterns (*karak*) a bit, and put in various ornaments (*changshik*), it makes it better to listen to, doesn’t it? It makes it more majestic and generates devotion” (M21). In this way, “[the chanting] doesn’t get boring, even if you do it for a long time” (M33). At the same time, such additions render the chant a more fitting offering (*kongyang*): “Because the texts are delivered as offerings to the Buddha, they must be properly presented. You can’t serve the most delicious food on a plastic plate, can you?” (M31). As the ensuing analysis will demonstrate, the monks vary greatly in their approaches to applying techniques. Some employ only a few simple patterns and add very little ornamentation; typically, these are either novices (like M2) or austere individuals who equate extra frills with deviation away from the monks’ life of honest poverty (like M1). Meanwhile, others implement diverse patterning, featuring extensive ornamentation of various kinds (like M30). Most monks occupy a position somewhere between these extremes.

Finally, to further encourage active engagement, one can imbue one’s chant with emotional qualities. We were sometimes told that chant perceived as emotionally expressive is inherently emotive, bearing potential to promote like-hearted (*tongshim*)

engagement and experiences of one-heartedness (*ilshim*), “evoking a sympathetic vibrating resonance (*ullim*) in others’ hearts” (M4). Here, the monks were clearly referring to processes of emotional contagion, now well-studied within music psychology (see, for example, Davies 2013 and Juslin 2019, 287–302). In addition to expressing fervor and devotion in their chanting (and thereby encouraging the same sentiments among others), the monks often convey other emotions. As the ensuing analysis shows, some favor modes, tempi, articulation, and ornamentation expressive of joy. One highly esteemed old monk, for example, told us:

The Heart Sutra is the ultimate praise song for the state of being alive so, yes, it’s something you can even dance to while chanting! Like the big bell’s sound, which reverberates with the sound of being alive, it praises life’s overwhelming sea of flowers. (M32)

However, we more frequently encountered associations with sorrowful (*aejo*) emotions. As one monk put it: “One’s heart weeps and it comes out in the sound” (M31). Another monk provided a wonderfully succinct explanation for the prevalence of sorrowful emotion as follows, while also alluding to the therapeutic strategy of “attunement” (Juslin 2019, 94):

All believers have their own sorrows, there in their hearts and running through the prayers that they bring into the main hall. We monks are people too, so we also have sorrows . . . In fact, sorrow is an inherent shared condition within the hearts of all sentient beings (*chunghsaengshim*). Perceiving and grasping this fact (*arach’arida*), one moulds one’s chanting in a sympathetic fashion. (M12)

On the other hand, some of the monks we encountered manifested a rather different approach, chanting in a quasi-mechanical, unemotional fashion. Such chant sonically represents and actively promotes the aforementioned state of perfectly controlled deep concentrated focus undisturbed by ego-generated thought or emotion (*sammae*, *samādhī*): “when one goes deep one realizes that one’s anguish is empty and useless, and it disappears” (M28). As another monk explained:

Yes, it may seem to sound a bit like a machine but it’s not like that inside. One is aiming wholeheartedly for the one thought to become all that there

is: total concentration. You see, that's the foundation for entering *sammae*.

(M1)

Thus far, we have elucidated the essential functions and objectives of chanting and identified the key attributes thought by the monks to promote single-pointed concentration. Now that this crucial background has been established, our attention will turn to explore the sonic patterns of chanting.

ANALYSING THE MONKS' CHANT: METHODS

To investigate the broad field of Chogye sect chanting, one obviously has to undertake comparative analysis on quite a large scale while ensuring that one is comparing like with like. As mentioned earlier, for 30 monks in our sample (M1–M30), it has been possible to isolate chant sections employing the exact same text and appearing at the same point within the same type of ritual. We have then been able to cross-compare the renditions, identify points of similarity and difference, and pinpoint constellations of characteristics that serve as markers of distinctiveness. Serving as the data for our large-scale cross-comparison, we have selected three passages of text from the daily service. The first two are chanted congregationally, led by the officiating monk, and the third is chanted solo by the monk.

The first passage used for cross-comparison is “Chöngguöp chinön” (hereafter “CC”), appearing at the start of Ch'önsugyöng (the Thousand Hand Sutra), which almost invariably constitutes the core of the daily service. CC is a Sanskrit incantation of the Buddha's true words (*chinön*), chanted to cleanse one's mouth (*chöngguöp*) in preparation for the unfolding ritual, “so one only communicates truly beautiful things” (M20). Following on from chanting “*Chöngguöp chinön*,” the monk and congregation then chant three times the incantation “*suri suri maha suri susuri sabaha*,” with the monk's strikes on a hand-held wooden bell (*mokt'ak*) marking out an unchanging regular pulse to aid synchrony. As in all congregational chanting, the syllable durations are completely predetermined, executed in the same way by all monks. CC introduces the service's primary musical mode, which is employed for much—or, in many cases, for all—of the ensuing congregational chanting. Here, the mode's essential pitches and inter-pitch relationships are made apparent, as are some of the most characteristic recurrent patterns, enabling the devotees to adapt quickly and join in.

The second passage used for cross-comparison is “Shinmyo changgu taedarani” (literally, “The Great Dhāraṇī of Wondrous Verses,” hereafter “ST”). Likewise chanted congregationally, this Sanskrit incantation constitutes the heart of Ch’ōnsugyōng, presenting a detailed exposition regarding Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara (Kwanūm). All devotees memorize the complete text, which is considered extraordinarily efficacious and lasts approximately two minutes when articulated at a leisurely pace. In the daily service, it is commonly recited three times in succession, though it may be fewer or more, depending on time-frame, tempo, and preferences. At one temple we visited, it was repeated ten times at an extremely rapid pace (by M8). For this study, we focus particularly on the first few lines of text: “*Shinmyo changgu taedarani* [in Sino-Korean], *namo radana tarayaya namagalyak parogije saebaraya mojisadabaya mahasadabaya mahagaro nigaya* [in Koreanized Sanskrit].” Again, all of the monks in our study invariably employed predetermined syllable durations for this passage. In our analysis, we have consulted each monk’s complete rendition to ascertain whether or not additional pitches or patterns are subsequently introduced. Whenever they are, we extend our analysis to cover more of the dhāraṇī’s content.

The third passage used for cross-comparison is “Posoch’ōng chinōn” (hereafter, “PC”). This Sanskrit incantation, “*Namu pobojeri karidari tat’a adaya*,” occurs later in the service and is repeated three times to ensure that the sutras’ messages and ensuing prayers are transmitted broadly (*poso ch’ōng*). Unlike CC and ST, PC is executed solo by the officiating monk to the accompaniment of a steady pulse produced by shaking a hand-held bell (*yoryōng*). Here, each monk is at liberty to vary syllable durations according to personal preferences and, in our sample, no two monks give exactly the same durations to the syllable groupings “*namu*,” “*pobojeri*,” “*karidari*,” and “*tat’a adaya*.” Because this incantation is delivered solo, monks can also implement modal pitch material and patterns not commonly employed during the congregational chanting. Accordingly, analysis of PC affords further insights into each monk’s personal style.

Having identified these three passages (CC, ST and PC) as suitable vehicles for investigating stylistic heterogeneity, we have then undertaken the following processes:

- 1) Extracting the three passages from each audio recording.
- 2) Transcribing the passages by ear, sometimes with the aid of Sonic Visualiser for more complex and rapid details. In almost all cases, the monk’s pitches are closely aligned to those of the equal-tempered scale. Only one monk includes a single

pitch ('G') that noticeably deviates; significantly, this monk is the sole exponent of *pŏmp'ae* that we encountered (M16).

- 3) Transposing the transcriptions so they all share the same central tone ('A'). Fortunately, in almost all cases, there is no ambiguity regarding what constitutes the central tone: one can easily identify a pitch that is frequently articulated and commonly used to start and end passages, having what one could call the strongest magnetic pull. There are only two exceptions, M5 and M6, discussed later. In every musical example, the original pre-transposition pitch is indicated through use of Scientific Pitch Notation (SPN); as an example, a marking of "A=D3" indicates that 'A' in the notation is actually articulated as low 'D' (294Hz) by the chanter.
- 4) Playing back the audio excerpts at a fairly loud volume and chanting along. Through this quasi-participation, one grows familiar with each monk's chanting style in much the same way that the devotees do: one concentrates fully in the present moment, listening attentively, maintaining synchrony, identifying constituent pitches and building-block patterns, and voicing recollected texts using related material so one's voice blends into the texture. The extended recordings of ST are best suited to this method because they represent the heart of the ritual, typically last over five minutes, and feature the monks' most favored modal material.
- 5) Identifying the most obvious modal characteristics of each segment by pinpointing (a) the most frequently articulated pitches, bearing strong structural significance; (b) pitches that are much less frequently articulated but which still seem to bear strong structural significance; (c) passing notes; and (d) non-passing notes that occur only seldomly and have little structural significance.
- 6) Scrutinizing each monk's renditions to identify their favored musical patterns. Ranging in scale from ornamental micro-details to longer melodic phrases, these patterns define the mode while collectively characterizing the monk's personal style. Each monk relies on a stock of these patterns, some employing just a few and others drawing from a large reservoir, and as the ensuing analysis will reveal, no two monks use exactly the same material. In his rigorous analytical studies of *pŏmp'ae* melismatic chant, Byong Won Lee shows how monks chant by stringing together a series of building-block cells (1977, 1983), and this is evidently also the case for standard chant (*p'yŏng yŏmbul*). Here too, the cells are typically between

two and six pulses in duration; many are closely related variants and the simplest are merely repetitions of a single pitch (Lee 1977, 1983). These cells can be extended to ensure a natural fit with the text, either by adding further iterations of certain pitches or by devising longer variants. Then, operating on a larger-scale, the monks organize their cell strings to generate macro-structures (a point Lee 1983 also makes)—melodic shapes charting a journey from a starting pitch to a finishing pitch via various stop-off points. In the forthcoming analysis section, the monks' building-block cells and larger-scale melodic shapes are identified using variously colored boxes and brackets, the colors aiding the reader's quick apprehension of patterns of repetition and variation.⁴

- 7) For each monk, assigning descriptors conveying their highly personal vocal quality, such as "urgent-sounding," "with a tight vibrato," "nasal," and "at the bottom of their alto range." Although such formulations may be interpreted somewhat differently, conventional transcription and computer-based methods are unable to convey these essential aspects of voice quality so succinctly.
- 8) Identifying the tempo of each rendition by measuring the strikes of the wooden bell against a metronome. For each section, the officiating monk sets the tempo according to their own preferences, thereby further characterizing their personal style and profoundly influencing the prevailing mood. There is considerable divergence in tempo between the monks' renditions, especially in regards to CC and ST, where the slowest is roughly half the speed of the quickest; see Figure 2.

⁴ Color is an extraordinarily effective aid in this regard, also for many people with visual impairment and color blindness (excepting the extremely rare condition of monochromatic color-blindness). Through careful testing using online color-blindness simulators, we have selected and assigned colors and shades in the interests of achieving maximum differentiability for the widest possible audience.

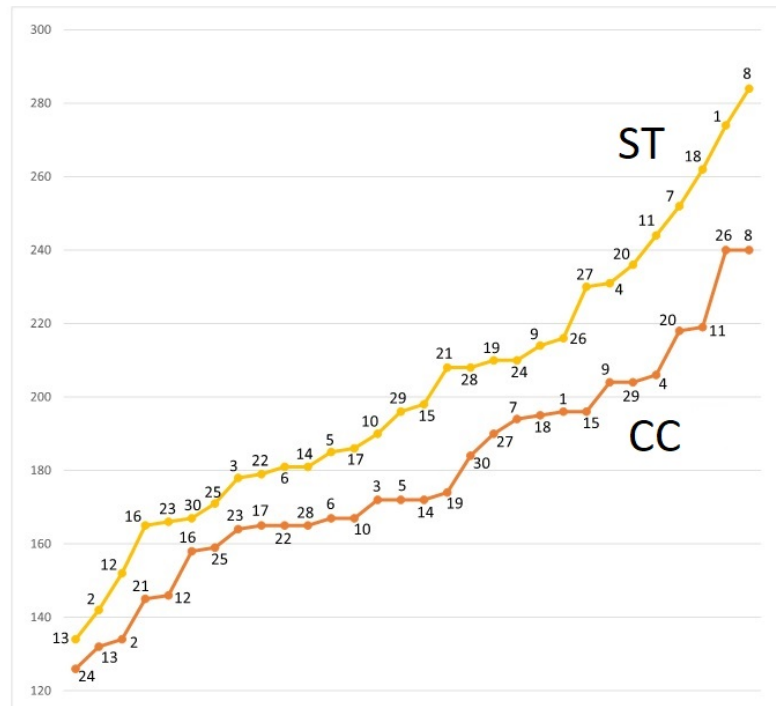


Figure 2. The tempi employed by the monks (M1–M30) for chanting CC and ST, in pulses per minute (Y-axis), as marked out on the *mokt'ak* wooden bell.

- 9) Finally, cross-comparing the data to deduce the full range of modes employed by the 30 monks in their chanting of CC, ST, and PC, as shown below in Example 1, where ‘A’ is the central tone in all cases.⁵ With such a large sample, categorization according to salient criteria is surely an essential part of the analytical process—a starting point for the effective identification of points of commonality and difference and a necessity for the systematic presentation of analytical findings. In this article, we categorize the monks’ chanting according to the number of pitches employed and their precise configurations (as shown below), recognizing that each monk’s choice and handling of pitches—in short, their realization of mode—plays a strongly salient role in characterizing their personal style. Unlike various other criteria of stylistic differentiation (concerning rhythm, tempo, timbre, articulation, and so on), these pitch-related criteria enable precise categorization within a manageable range of categories and, crucially, one encounters only very few ambiguities regarding the number and configuration of pitches used.

⁵ Example 1 does not include information regarding how the individual pitches are handled because, in many cases, the monks treat them rather differently.

The image displays musical notation for chanting modes, categorized by the number of notes used. Each mode is shown on a five-line staff with a treble clef. The notes are represented by small circles (half notes).

- One note:** A single note on the second line of the staff.
- Two notes:** Two notes on the second and third lines of the staff.
- Three notes:** Three notes on the second, third, and fourth lines of the staff.
- Four notes:** Four notes on the second, third, fourth, and fifth lines of the staff.
- Five notes:** Five notes on the second, third, fourth, fifth, and first lines of the staff.
- Six notes:** Six notes on the second, third, fourth, fifth, first, and second lines of the staff.

Example 1. The full range of modes employed by the monks for chanting CC, ST, and PC, all with ‘A’ as the main pitch.

Even before undertaking detailed analysis, Example 1 suggests considerable heterogeneity within chanting practice, with monks variously employing between one and six pitches in a wide range of constellations. Many of these modes preserve aspects of the pentatonic mode called “*menari*,” which features the pitches E–G–A–C–D, with E, A, and C as the main structural pillars (Yi Pohyŏng 2008): some seem like partial versions of *menari*, others like variants of it, and still others as enhancements. It is no surprise that *menari* flavor should be conspicuous: *menari* is extensively used in the high-status chant of *pŏmp’ae* (Lee 1977 and 1983) and it is also associated with the Eastern provinces, where the sect’s largest temple Haeinsa is located.⁶ Accordingly, the most extensively listened-to recordings of traditional chant employ the *menari* mode almost exclusively, including earlier recordings by Kim Sŏnggong, Hwaam, and Pŏmch’ŏl and more recent ones by Kŭmgang, Yŏngin, and Inmuk (See the “Online Recordings” section at the end of this article for URL details). Some of the monks we encountered acknowledged drawing influence from these recordings when they were trainees, as will be discussed below. However, as the ensuing analysis will show, all of the monks using *menari*-related material foster their own individual ‘takes’ on it, treating the constituent pitches rather differently and favoring different patterns, to the extent that it would be misleading to state that they are all employing the same mode. And, furthermore, many of the modes

⁶ While training a large proportion of the sect’s monks, Haeinsa has been a base for many influential figures, including the foremost post-war reformer Seongcheol [Sŏngch’ŏl] (1912–1993).

outlined in Example 1 (above) diverge substantially from *menari*: some place emphasis on B, others do not feature C or E, and still others include pitches like F#, G# and C#.


The following section presents our findings by systematically working through each of the modes outlined in Example 1, homing in on each monk's handling of the pitch material while also pinpointing the other features that collectively define their personal chanting style. As was noted earlier, we are resolved against a 'cherry picking' approach. Rather, to expose the true extent of stylistic diversity within Chogye sect chanting, we present concise style profiles for all 30 monks (M1–M30). As the reader proceeds through these profiles one-by-one, it will soon become apparent that each chanter does indeed have a remarkably distinctive chanting style, notably different from all the previously described ones, and this impression of clearly differentiated stylistic variation only grows as one continues through. However, for readers with less time and inclination, we would recommend perusing a random sample (featuring a variety of modes) before turning to the analytical summing-up section on page 53 and continuing into the subsequent section. It is telling that this latter approach still goes a long way towards revealing the sect's stylistic heterogeneity.

ANALYSIS OF THE MONKS' CHANTING


One-Note Chanting


Only one monk in our sample (M1) concentrates on a single pitch during congregational chanting. As shown in Example 2 below, this monk only seldomly articulates a single syllable on C (boxed in red) or, even more rarely, on E, and he introduces almost no ornamentation. He chants in a strong, slightly raspy, open voice in the middle of his range and adds no vibrato, manifesting a rather austere approach. In passages of solo chanting, such as PC (also included below), he expands his pitch material into a four-note mode (E–G–A–C). Here, although his delivery remains austere relative to other monks', he adds some distinctive decoration, including vocables and a raspy growl for "pobo-*jeri*" (indicated in red). Like many monks, he ends PC with a switch to free-rhythm.


♩ = 196
A = D3

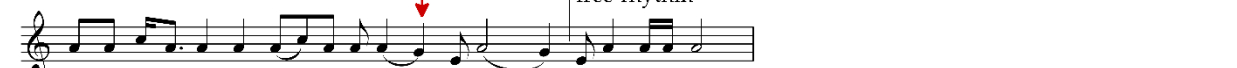
CC  x 3
Chöng - gu - eop chin-ön Su - ri su - ri ma - ha su - ri su - su - ri sa - ba - ha

♩ = 274

ST 
Shin-myo chang-gu tae-da-ra - ni Na-mo ra - da-na ta - ra - ya - ya na-ma-gal-yak pa-ro - gi - je sae-ba - ra - ya


mo - ji - sa - da - ba - ya ma - ha - sa - da - ba - ya ma - ha - ga - ro - ni - ga - ya om sal - ba - ba - ye - su

PC 
Na-ö mu-ö po bo-je - ri - a ka-ri-da - ri ta-t'a a-da-ya Na-mu po_ bo-je-ri - a ka-ri-da - ri ta-t'a a-da-ya


Na-mu po-bo-je - ri ka_ ri-da-ri - e ta-t'a_ a_ a-da-ya

Example 2. M1's chanting, highlighting his rare additions of another pitch in CC and ST (boxed in red), and extra vowels and vocal rasp in PC.

In conversation, this senior monk testified to devoting many years to meditation, undertaken both in communal meditation rooms and in extreme isolation, and he expressed suspicion towards monks who dedicate effort to cultivating complex chant:

Only by having honest poverty as one's foundation can one carry on with spiritual discipline . . . In my case and amongst many other monks, we tend to think that those who specialize in *pömp'ae* are missing the point . . . If one's clothes, food, and ways of life become too luxurious, one has gone down the wrong path.

He further explained that his own way of chanting had developed “in line with [his] disposition” as a manifestation of his earnest devotion (*kanjölhan chöngsöng*): “Chanting is one means in my fervent spiritual discipline and prayer, so earnestness would naturally enter into the sound.” He also linked his vocal quality to encounters with other chanters, including the celebrated hereditary shaman Kim Taerye, noted for her powerful husky voice: “I listened to [her] in a video on the internet and was moved. Her big voice moved

the spirits. So that’s one of the sources I’ve borrowed from—taking the good bits and applying them in my chant.”

Two-Note Chanting

Only one monk (M2) exclusively employs two pitches (A and C) for congregational chanting.⁷ As shown in Example 3 (below), he employs just a handful of building-block cells to seesaw between these pitches: a few closely related A→C cells (boxed in blue) and a few closely related C→A cells (boxed in red), often extended with further repetitions of A to ensure a comfortable fit with the text. The most commonly articulated C→A cell is especially distinctive: no other monk in our sample employs it. PC is not included below because it was delivered by a different monk.

The simplicity of this chant is partly indicative of M2’s novice status. Still based in the training institute (*kangwŏn*) of the temple where the service took place, he adheres closely to the temple’s “in-house style” (*chibanje*), passed down through tradition amongst other “house customs” (*kap’ung*). Being one of the sect’s 25 head temples, this temple accommodates a sizeable (though diminishing) community of resident monks and, like the others, fosters its own stock of simple building-block patterns for use

$\text{♩} = 134$
A = D³

CC

Chŏng gu-ŏp chin-ŏn Su-ri su - ri ma ha su-ri su-su-ri sa - ba-ha Su-ri su - ri ma ha su-ri su-su-ri sa-ba-ha

Su-ri su - ri ma-ha su-ri su-su-ri sa - ba-ha

$\text{♩} = 142$

ST

Shin-myŏ chang-gu tae-da-ra-ni Na - mo - ra ta - na-da-ra - ya - ya nam-ag - al - yak pa - ro - gi - je sa - ba - ra - ya

mo - ji - sa - da - ba - ya ma - ha - sa - da - ba - ya ma - ha - ga - ro ni - ga - ya

Example 3. M2’s two-note chanting of CC and ST, with A→C cells boxed in blue and C→A cells in red.

⁷ Although M4 and M25 also employ only these same two pitches (A and C) for chanting CC, immediately afterwards, they expand their pitch palate, using more complex modes, as discussed later.

whenever the monks are chanting together, in the interests of ensuring a harmonious texture (M32, M38). Even though the service we attended was directed at the lay community (with the resident monks engaged elsewhere), this novice stuck to the in-house patterns because that was all he knew—chanting at a slow tempo with no added ornamentation and the plodding deliberateness typical of novices. A highly esteemed senior monk, who was also present for the purpose of chanting the service’s final prayers, explained: “He’s a learning monk so his chanting hasn’t yet begun to blossom” (M32). This same monk also noted that the temple had always fostered a simple in-house style on account of its enduring strong focus on meditation, since at least 50 years earlier when he himself was a novice.

Three-Note Chanting

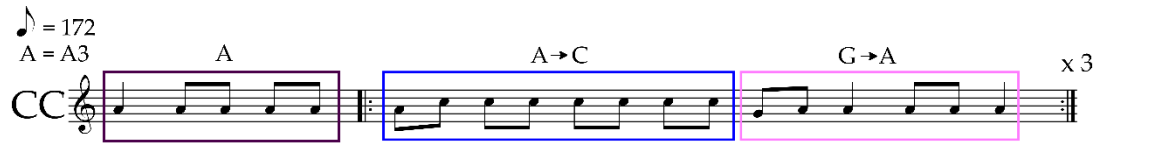
Four monks (M3, M4, M5, and M6) rely on a three-note mode for congregational chanting, while some others occasionally use a restricted three-note portion of their usual mode for certain sections. Four three-note pitch sets are in evidence: G–A–C; E–G–A⁸; E–A–B; and G–A–B—the former two retaining some of the flavor of the aforementioned *menari* mode (E–G–A–C–D).

M3 uses a G–A–C mode throughout the entire service, where A and C are the main pitches and G only ever appears as a starting pitch before focusing on A.⁹ As shown in Example 4, she relies on four building-block patterns, which are slightly extended or contracted to ensure a perfect fit with the text. Chanting in a plain uncultivated voice at moderate tempo, she adds no ornamentation.

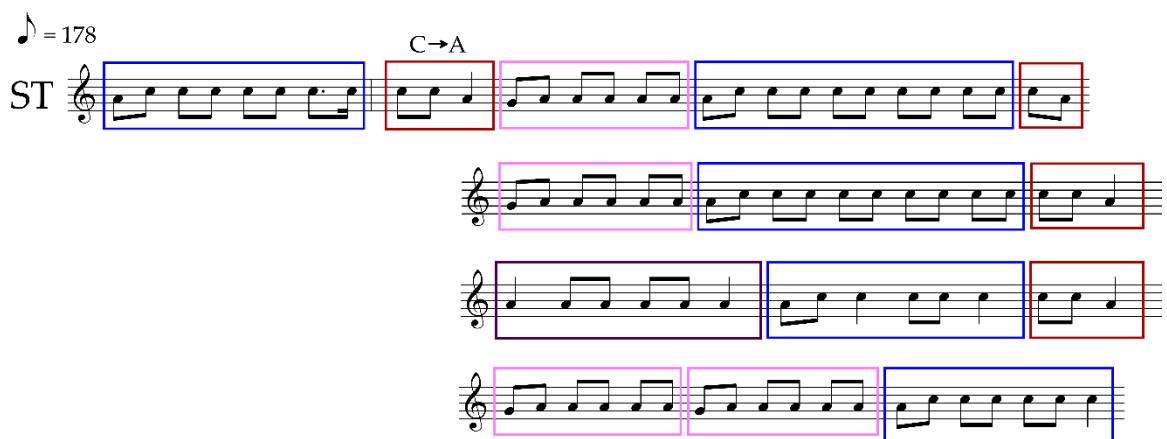
⁸ An E, G, A mode only features once in our sample, delivered by a senior monk (M17) at the start of the service for CC. This monk then promptly expands the mode upwards to include the other *menari* pitches of C and D. Accordingly, his chanting will be addressed later (Example 15).

⁹ M21 uses a similar G–A–C mode for ST. However, because he often employs the complete *menari* mode in other sections (including PC and CC), his chant is addressed below (Example 20).

♩ = 172
A = A3

CC 

♩ = 178

ST 

Example 4. M3's three-note chanting of CC and ST, with the four building-block patterns boxed in different colors.

At the time of recording, this monk (M3) was still a novice (like M2), receiving training in the head temple where the service took place. After the service was over, she explained to us that she was indeed producing the temple's in-house style patterns exactly as she had learned them:

We learners do it simply, without a big range and not dynamically varied, in a commonplace fashion. What we do is different from the older monks, isn't it? After graduating and heading out into the regions, perhaps my chanting will develop.

Only one monk (M4) relies extensively on an E–A–B mode. At several points during the service, the upper interval is expanded to A→C, including at the beginning for CC and during PC, where he also adds G as a downward passing note. In such episodes, his delivery retains *menari*-like qualities. However, for the most part, this monk concentrates on E–A–B, and indeed those are the only pitches employed throughout the service's core—the 10-plus minutes devoted to ST (see Example 5). Chanting low in his baritone range with a rather constricted throat and pronounced rasp, this monk's vocal style is especially distinctive. While alternating between focus on A and B and occasionally dipping down to E, he evokes a strong contrast by applying and then removing a very wide vibrato (indicated in green), as though quasi-mechanically switching on and off the

♩ = 231
A = B2

ST

PC

Example 5. M4's three-note (E–A–B) chanting of ST, and his chanting of PC (E–G–A–C), with passages of vibrato indicated in green, and pitch-switching cells boxed in various colors.

effect every few seconds. Example 5 indicates these features and also identifies the cells he uses to switch between the focal pitches. As can be seen, in PC, the B→A cell becomes C→A, and A→E→A becomes A→G→E→A.

This monk (M4) told us that he had been a monk for over fifteen years, during which time his chant had developed via typical processes: as a novice he had emulated the senior monks' chanting and drawn influences from recordings (especially by Pömch'öl), but subsequently his chanting had developed away from these models, in line with his own range, tone, breathing, and predilections. During sections like CC and PC, one can hear hints of the *menari* patterning pervading Pömch'öl's chant, but when he becomes immersed in ST, those remnants from his earlier learning experiences slip away and we hear a clearer manifestation of his emergent personal style.

Only two monks in our sample (M5 and M6) employ G–A–B modes, relying on this material for large portions of congregational chanting, including the service's central ST section. Nevertheless, these monks' styles are characterized by rather different patterning; see Example 6. Chanting low in his bass range, M5 uses two building-block patterns in alternation (boxed in blue and red), which can be extended with further reiterations of the central pitch A (for the blue pattern) and B (for the red pattern) to fit comfortably with the text. This generates a fixed succession of pitches, G, A, G, B, A, on a continuous loop. Meanwhile, chanting towards the bottom of her alto vocal range, M6 lingers on certain pitches for longer periods in a more unpredictable fashion, with a penchant for

B→A→G falling patterns (boxed in yellow). In both M5 and M6's renditions of ST, there is extensive focus on G, so G is often perceived as the tonal center. However, elsewhere, these monks place more emphasis on A: see for example, M6's rendition of CC (included in Example 6, below) and M5's four-note chanting of CC (in Example 12, below). Both monks (M5 and M6) apply no dynamic variation, no vibrato, and very little ornamentation, exhibiting the aforementioned quasi-mechanical emotionless quality.

While M5 linked his chanting style to his ascetic principles ("I am one of those monks who thinks things should be kept simple"), M6 stressed her preference for "pure and simple" sounds, emphasizing their effectiveness for evoking the desired state. It is worth noting, however, that a woman selling Buddhist items in the corner of the ritual space where M6 had previously officiated contested the effectiveness of such a quasi-mechanical approach; apparently, she had observed the number of attendees grow and diminish and their chanting become louder and more subdued in accordance with the "expressiveness" of the officiating monk's delivery.

M5 $\text{♩} = 185$
A = B \flat 2

extended extended

extended extended extended

M6 $\text{♩} = 181$
A = G3

emphasis on G

emphasis on A

$\text{♩} = 167$

M6 CC

Example 6. M5 and M6's three-note (G–A–B) chanting of ST, with M5's building-block patterns boxed in blue and red, and M6's falling patterns boxed in yellow. M6's chanting of CC is also included.

During her many years of working there, she had watched a great many monks come and go, each of them “doing it in their own way.”

Four-Note Chanting

Eight monks in our sample (M7–M14) rely exclusively on four-note modes for congregational chanting and, in many cases, also for solo sections. The following pitch-sets are in evidence: G–A–C–D; A–C–D–E; E–G–A–C/C#; E–A–B–C; E–G–A–B; E–F#–A–B; and E–G#–A–B—the first three clearly retaining some *menari* flavor (E–G–A–C–D).

Only two monks employ a G–A–C–D mode (M7 and M8), invariably using it for congregational chanting but switching to other material for certain solo sections, including PC. As shown in Example 7, these monks employ an almost identical set of building-block patterns, which, as usual, are extended or contracted to match the text. Nevertheless, their versions of ST reveal slight differences: M7 employs an additional pattern characterized by more extensive focus on C (boxed in light blue); and, towards the end of the excerpt, the monks switch to the next pattern at different points. This chant is characterized by the following strong progression throughout: A/C→D→A/C→D etc., usually traveling via C.

CC

♩ = 194
A = C3

M7

M8

♩ = 240
A = A2

C → A - CDCA

G A

ST

♩ = 252

M7

M8

♩ = 284

M7

M8

Example 7. M7 and M8's very closely related four-note (G–A–C–D) delivery of CC and ST, with constituent building-block patterns boxed in different colors.

Significantly, M7's recording was made in Haeinsa, one of the Three Jewel temples. Haeinsa's chant instructor subsequently explained to us that M7 was still a novice, so he was reproducing the patterns in line with Haeinsa's in-house style, even though the service we attended was directed towards devotees. In our conversations, monks would often associate Haeinsa with vigorous rapid chanting (relative to the other Jewel temples, Songgwangsa and Tongdosa), and the chant instructor pointed out that it has indeed "taken on the tenor of battle action" (M39). Meanwhile, it seems likely that M8 had formerly trained in Haeinsa: his use of the same patterns and extraordinarily fast pace—

the quickest in our sample—point towards such a background. Unfortunately, however, we did not enquire about this monk’s training during our interview.¹⁰

Only one monk in our sample (M9) uses an A–C–D–E mode. Once again, he is a novice, this time demonstrating the in-house style of Songgwangsa, as employed throughout the monks’ collective chanting. At the service we attended, the hall was filled with monks (and just a small cluster of devotees), chanting in perfect unison throughout the service and amply demonstrating that the sequence of patterns is completely fixed, cemented through frequent repetition. As shown in Example 8, Songgwangsa shares some of its building-block patterns with Haeinsa (shown in Example 7 above). However, Songgwangsa’s house-style features an additional upward step to E (highlighted in lime green) and does not use G. Here, the progression is as follows: A→D→E (again via C), evoking a strong cadential lead back to A.¹¹

M10 is the only monk to use an E–G–A–C mode consistently throughout the entire service.¹² Here, C is used in alternation with A to complement and contrast; G features

Example 8 consists of two musical examples, CC and ST, in 2/4 time. Example CC is marked with a tempo of 204 and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It features two staves of music. The first staff has a blue box around the first four notes (A-ACA) and a pink box around the last four notes (D-CDC). The second staff has a lime green box around the first four notes (E-CED) and a red box around the last four notes (A-CA). Example ST is marked with a tempo of 214 and features two staves of music. The first staff has pink boxes around the first four notes, the next four notes, and the last four notes. The second staff has lime green boxes around the first four notes, the next four notes, and the last four notes, with red boxes around the first four notes and the next four notes, and a blue box around the last four notes.

Example 8. M9’s four-note (A–C–D–E) chanting of CC and ST, with building-block patterns marked.

¹⁰ One can hear the exact same melodic material in an online recording of Haeinsa’s monks chanting the Heart Sutra (See “Online Recordings” at the end of this article).

¹¹ The exact same melodic material can be heard in an online recording of Songgwangsa’s monks chanting the Heart Sutra (see “Online Recordings”; see also Kim Yŏngun 2008, 2010).

¹² Although no other monks employ a E–G–A–C mode for congregational chanting, some do for their solo chanting, including for PC (M1, M2, M4, M5, M9 and M27).

almost exclusively as a passing note down to low E; and E again serves a cadential role leading back to A. In certain sections, C is raised to C# (for example, in ST) and in others G is raised to G# (for example, in PC); these two pitches are clearly variable within his conception and rendition of the mode. Otherwise, however, he consistently treats the mode's pitches in the same way while applying the same three building-block patterns throughout; see Example 9. As usual, these building-block patterns are expanded, contracted, and varied to fit with the text and enhance attractiveness.

This monk's (M10) delivery is medium-paced, unornamented and lacking precise control, sounding akin to a novice's chanting. However, as he explained to us, he actually completed his training many years earlier. It is simply the case that he had then devoted himself entirely to meditation, as many monks do, before recently deciding to emerge from the meditation center (*sŏnwŏn*) and take on the role of officiating. He explained:

Example 9 consists of three musical examples, each on two staves. The first example, labeled 'CC', has a tempo of 167 and a pitch of A = F3. It features two building-block patterns: 'ACA' (blue box) and 'CA' (red box). The second example, labeled 'ST', has a tempo of 190 and a pitch of C#. It features three building-block patterns: 'ACA' (blue box), 'AGE' (magenta box), and 'CA' (red box). The third example, labeled 'PC', has a pitch of G#. It features three building-block patterns: 'ACA' (blue box), 'AGE' (magenta box), and 'CA' (red box). The notation includes treble clefs, a common time signature, and various rhythmic values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes).

Example 9. M10's four-note chanting of CC, ST and PC, with the three building-block patterns boxed.

I don't know the pitches and don't have special techniques (*kigyo*) but my devoted heart (*chinshim*) is there in my voice. Devotion is the key. If you do it with a heart that is 100% devoted, it has the potential to move you.

Conversely, even if you do *ōsan* [the complex patterns of *pōmp'ae*] extremely skillfully, no one will like listening to it if it's not coming from a devoted heart.

Four monks employ E–A–B–C modes (M11, M12, M13, and M14), using them throughout their entire services. To varying extents, their chanting conjures up associations with the well-known mode *yukchabaegi*, which originates from the Southwestern Chōlla Provinces, appears extensively in well-known genres like *p'ansori* and *shinawi*, and shares the same pitch material (see Yi Pohyōng 2008). On the other hand, in *yukchabaegi*, C tends to be treated as an unstable breaking-tone (*kkōngnŭn mok*) falling to B via clear-cut step-motion and E is often enhanced with vibrato—features rarely evidenced in the monks' chanting. As shown in Example 10, these four monks demonstrate markedly contrasting personal approaches, favoring contrasting tempi, treating the four constituent pitches quite differently, and using different building-block patterns.

CC

♩ = 219
A = B2

M11 ECA seldom ACAE x 3

M12 ACBA favored motif (CBA) EACBA

M13 ACBC EAC favored motif (CBC)

M14 Dense ornamentation (BAC) frequent

ST

♩ = 244

Triplet patterning

D frequent

Example 10. The contrasting four-note (E–A–B–C) chanting styles of M11, M12, M13 and M14, with characteristic building-block patterns indicated.

-M11 chants low in his baritone register at a very quick pace, adding a sprightly attack to each syllable and a rapid moderate-depth vibrato. Highly distinctively, his frequent movements from E to A happen via a leap up to C (boxed in light red). Conversely, the movement from A to E sometimes also happens via C (boxed in dark red). The note B is only introduced occasionally in downward motion from C to A. Overall, then, this style is characterized by rapidly executed arpeggiated patterning based on E, A, C.

- M12 chants at the bottom of his baritone register (so the lowest pitch is barely audible) at a fairly slow pace, with weak attacks, seamlessly smooth transition from syllable to syllable, little ornamentation, and no vibrato. There are no leaps between E and C, and B is always included in downward motion from C to A. His principal building-block pattern is A→C→B→A (boxed in light blue), sometimes preceded with E: E→A→C→B→A (boxed in dark blue). He told us that he had only just completed his compulsory training and still closely adhered to the in-house style of the temple where he trained and where we recorded the service.

- M13 chants at the center of his tenor register at a very slow pace throughout—the slowest in our sample—similarly with weak attacks, smooth transitions from syllable to syllable, little ornamentation, and no vibrato. Rather distinctively, he sometimes implements a lilting triplet rhythm against the duplet pulses of his wooden bell.¹³ As was explained to us, this is a common strategy for generating forward momentum when the pace is extremely slow. This monk's building-block patterns again involve step-wise motion up and down the E, A, C triad but, here, B almost always appears within the context of a sliding C→B→C movement (boxed in light green). Another essential building-block pattern for this monk is E→A→C (boxed in dark green).

- Finally, M14's chant differs markedly from the others, his ornamentation being among the densest and most varied of any we encountered. The mode's upper-most note is rarely articulated as a prolonged easily identifiable pitch; rather, it typically appears within the context of ornamentation (boxed in magenta). Slowed-down playback also reveals that he varies the pitching of this upper-most note: in CC and PC it is C, but in ST it is D. Chanting at a moderate pace in the center of his tenor register, his crisply

¹³ Here, Sonic Visualiser measurements confirm the triplet-quavers to be 0.30 seconds in duration (+/- 0.02) against 0.45 duration pulses on the gong.

♩ = 172
A = A \flat 2

M5
CC

A = C3 G on repeat

M8
PC

Example 11. M5's four-note (E–G–A–B) chanting of CC, plus M8's four-note delivery of PC using the same pitches.

articulated rapid patterning is complemented by a detached delivery, with every syllable articulated as a discrete unit.

E–G–A–B modes appear only rarely in our sample. Specifically, at certain points in the service, M5 and M6 expand their G–A–B mode into a four-note mode by adding the pitch E, serving as a cadential device leading to A. For example, M5 does this during CC, shown in Example 11. Here, he uses the same two building-block patterns illustrated earlier (boxed in red and blue, as in Example 6) and adds a third featuring E (boxed in yellow). Only one other monk in our sample ever employs an E–G–A–B mode, specifically M8 for PC—shown in Example 11.

An E–F \sharp –A–B mode appears only once in our sample, used by M29 for the solo chanting of PC; see Example 12. As can be seen, the notes G \sharp and B \flat are also sounded, but only extremely briefly. The rhythmic complexity of this monk's patterning is especially notable, particularly in the second articulation of the incantation (boxed in red), for which Sonic Visualiser was required to identify durations. Here, he articulates patterning based on a series of dotted sixteenth note groupings, cutting against his hand-bell's lilting triplet patterns in a fascinating way; as the dashed vertical lines indicate, there are only three points of voice/bell accent synchrony during this passage. Thereafter, he repeats the exact same patterning for the text "*karidari tat'a adaya*," again closely synchronizing his vocalization with the bell's triplet sounds.

$\text{♩} = 135$
A = A3

all in sync with bell's triplet rhythms

Na - a - mu po - bo - je - ri ka - ri da - ri ta - t'a - a - da - ya

etc...

succession of durations - against bell's triplet rhythms

all in sync with bell's triplet rhythms

Na mu po - bo - je - ri ka ri - da ri ta - t'a - a - da - ya

cont...

Example 12. M29's four-note (E–F[♯]–A–B) chanting of PC, with especially complex rhythmic patterning boxed in red.

This monk (M29) told us that he had been a monk for over 40 years and had participated in rituals throughout that period, often as officiator. As a novice, he had briefly learnt *pōmp'ae* but, thereafter, had always focused on standard chant, initially emulating other officiators and cassette tapes (especially those of Kim Sōnggong) but then “naturally” forging his own personal approach. As he put it: “You don’t stick with the sound you started with . . . Eventually, everyone does it using their own melodies.” This monk’s melodies are among the most complex in our sample, not only rhythmically but also in regards to pitch movement, articulation, and vibrato, which he subtly varies while chanting at a moderate pace in the center of his tenor range. For congregational chanting, where there is less scope for rhythmic invention, he uses a wider pitch-palette—typically, the *menari* mode with B added as a passing note (E–G–A–B–C–D), detailed below.

Finally, only one monk (M15) employs an E–G[♯]–A–B mode. At the start of the service, he articulates the upper-most pitch as C but, following an abrupt modulation during CC (featuring a conspicuous G[♯]), that pitch shifts to B, where it remains for the rest of the service. Example 13 shows his highly distinctive style, identifying his favored building-block patterns and other unusual features. It is worth noting that M15 is the only monk in our sample to use the modern Korean-language version of Ch’ōngsugyōng, as currently recommended by the sect’s headquarters (since 2013).

Example 13. M15’s four-note (E–G#–A–B) chanting of CC and ST, with building-block patterns boxed and other style-defining characteristics identified.

Accordingly, CC begins with “*Kuöbül malghinün chinön*” instead of “*Chöngguöþ chinön*,” requiring ten pulses instead of six. Thereafter, the original Sanskrit is retained for CC’s remaining text, as it is for ST.

In M15’s style (above), E and G# feature much less often than A and B but always prominently, specifically as starting-notes. In most cases, patterns starting on E return to A via a leap upwards to B/C (boxed in red). Meanwhile, patterns starting on G# always begin with a slight emphasis before sliding smoothly upwards to A (boxed in blue). When B appears as a starting note, it always quickly falls back down to A (boxed in yellow). The pitch A is sometimes attributed with additional distinctive features, including: an upward sweep to B (boxed in magenta); dense ornamentation (marked in green); and a wide vibrato, which is abruptly switched on and off to form an acute contrast with the otherwise vibrato-less delivery—an effect similar to that fostered by M4 (see Example 5). This monk chants at a moderate pace, very low in his bass register, with a rich and smooth vocal quality.

Five-Note Chanting

In our sample, ten monks (M16—M25) rely on a five-note mode for their congregational chanting and, in some cases, also for solo chanting. The following pitch

sets are in evidence: E–G–A–C–D; E–G–A–B–C; E–G–A–B–D; E–F#–A–B–C#; E–F#–A–B–C; and E–F#–G#–A–B. The monks' various takes on *menari* (E–G–A–C–D) will be examined first before exploring the other five-note modes.

M16 immediately stands out as the only monk to employ the *hossori* style of *pŏmp'ae* for solo chanting. During our conversation, he told us that he had started learning *pŏmp'ae* over twenty years earlier and had long been teaching it in specialized chant schools for monks (*ŏsan hakkyo*) and performing it on stage, also internationally. He himself acknowledged the persistence of a more ascetic strain within the sect, stemming from the purification drives (*chŏnghwa chakŏp*) of the 1950s and 60s and emphasizing simplification (*kansohwa*) in ritual and dedication to sutra study and meditation. However, in the relatively relaxed ethos of recent times, small numbers of monks are choosing to cultivate skills in more elaborate ritual delivery, with a tiny number pursuing them to a high level and introducing them during the daily service. Like several other monks, M16 explained that *pŏmp'ae* practitioners are expected to conform closely to fixed models in every minute detail; unlike standard chant (*p'yŏng yŏmbul*), where monks are free to forge their own distinctive personal styles, *pŏmp'ae* has long been transmitted as a component within Cultural Property 50 (appointed in 1973). Like many other designated items, it persists into current times as a rare and fragile artform that must not be subjected to change.

This monk (M16) uses the *hossori* style of *pŏmp'ae* in his rendition of PC, specifically for the extended “*namo*” passage before switching to standard chant (*p'yŏng yŏmbul*) for the remainder; see Example 14, below. A number of distinctive *hossori* features are immediately apparent: brief application of falsetto, occasional non-standard tuning of G (mid-way between G and G#), and a highly melismatic delivery of the text. Example 14 also shows this monk's standard chant delivery of CC and ST. As can be seen, much of the *menari* melodic material used for standard chant is also evident within the small section of PC *hossori* (boxed in red). This is no surprise: as M16 and various other monks told us, those who are proficient in *pŏmp'ae* employ it as the heart of their practice, deriving their patterning for standard chant from that reservoir via a process of simplification (*kansohwa*). Yet this monk still subjects his building-block patterns to diverse types of transformation, generating a rich array of variants; compare, for example, the various blue-boxed patterns in Example 14. It is also worth noting his unusual

‘bluesy’ flattening of the high E in ST (boxed in green)—a feature occasionally introduced elsewhere also and which no other monks in our sample ever demonstrate.

PC

A = A \flat 3

hossori:

standard:

CC

$\text{♩} = 158$

ST

$\text{♩} = 165$

Example 14. M16’s chanting of PC, CC, and ST, all using the *menari* mode (E–G–A–C–D), with building-block patterns boxed. The initial passage (“*namo*”) is delivered in the *hossori* style.

He chants in the center of his tenor range at a moderately slow tempo with a rather nasal sonority, occasionally adding quite florid ornamentation.

M17 relies on the *menari* mode throughout the daily service, chanting at a slightly faster pace than M16 with an open-throated quality. As shown in Example 15, his style is characterized by extensive use of closely related A, G, E, A building-block patterns (boxed in red and blue), evoking a playful switching-around of the placement of the rapid elements (sixteenth notes). This distinctive feature is evident in both his restricted E–G–A-mode delivery of CC—entirely comprised of such cells—and his full *menari* delivery of

ST. Although he articulates the pitch B at one point in ST, he never does so again during the following eight minutes of chanting; hence this rendition is included within this category rather than the six-note category detailed later.

The image displays two musical staves. The first staff, labeled 'CC', has a tempo of ♩ = 165 and a pitch of A = F3. It shows a sequence of notes with several variations boxed in blue and red. The second staff, labeled 'ST', has a tempo of ♩ = 186. It shows a sequence of notes with variations boxed in red, blue, and magenta. A time signature of 0:38 is indicated at the end of the second staff.

Example 15. M17's three-note (E–G–A) chanting of CC and his subsequent expansion into the full *menari* mode (E–G–A–C–D), with distinctive A, G, E, A variants boxed in red and blue, and C/D patterning boxed in magenta.

M18 uses the *menari* mode throughout the whole service, chanting at a brisk tempo with an open voice. As he himself explained, his penchant for this fast delivery stems in part from his initial training in Haeinsa, frequently noted for its vigorous pace. However, as demonstrated by Example 16, his chant style has clearly developed enormously from Haeinsa's simple in-house style, "naturally changing over time in line with my changing conditions and circumstances." Most obviously, he now employs a much wider array of pitches and patterns; compare, for example, the dark blue- and magenta-boxed building-block patterns in Example 17 with their equivalents in Example 7. In addition, he now favors meandering melodic contours that gradually ascend and descend in stepwise fashion—in this respect, resembling M16's chant (see Example 14). However, M18 chants at a much faster pace, covers a wider pitch range (up to high G), employs different ornamentation (frequently applying rapid grace-notes), and favors rather different melodic shapes. In particular, he has a penchant for four-note shapes where the second note is a step above or below the first and falls on the offbeat, the third note is a repetition of that pitch, and the fourth note is a step above or below that one and also falls on the offbeat; all instances of these shapes are indicated with green brackets in

Example 16. Meanwhile, he attributes the flow with dynamic ebbs, surges, and accents, lending his chant an especially expressive and emotional quality; it sounds as though his fluctuating emotions are being registered in the chant sound (see Juslin 2019, 122–139, 156–168). Significantly, in interview, this monk was one of those who stressed the

PC

A = C3

ACAGE EA ACDC A

cDc EDC

soft

CC

$\text{♩} = 195$

ST

$\text{♩} = 262$

soft louder

EA ACDC A variation (going higher) and expansion

soft louder

Example 16. M18's *menari* chanting of PC, CC, and ST, with building block patterns boxed and an especially favored shape indicated by green brackets.

importance of the congregants' hearts being moved during chanting: "It's a fundamental question: how can sound be used to move people's hearts—one's own heart movements making another person's heart move?"

Like M18, M19 exclusively employs the *menari* mode and imbues his chant with a distinctly emotional quality, generating contours that gradually rise and fall while applying dynamic swells and decays. However, here, the dynamic gradations occur at a slower rate. Some diminish seamlessly into silence while he lingers on a single pitch

(usually A). Others swell into brief applications of slow-and-wide vibrato, suggesting a welling-up of emotion to a point where the voice becomes unsteady. Meanwhile, the pace is significantly slower than M18's and there is a complete absence of sharply articulated grace notes. All of these attributes imbue this chant with an especially melancholic or sorrowful (*aejo*) flavor of the type identified earlier in this article. Example 17 also identifies this monk's main building-block patterns, highlighting his extensive use of a descending shape that leads from E (and sometimes G) down to A (boxed in red), usually culminating in a distinctive C→G→A pattern (boxed in green). Elsewhere, he mainly focuses on A with occasional dips down to low E, but he sometimes shifts the focus to C (boxed in blue) or D (boxed in magenta).

M20's exclusively *menari*-based chant, delivered very low in her alto range, also possesses a certain sorrowful quality. She explained that it sometimes promotes an outpouring of sadness in listeners, even though she is not personally experiencing such an emotion while chanting. On the other hand, this monk chants at very rapid tempi and maintains a strident delivery throughout, without attributing such obvious dynamic swells to the flow: "Originally, I'm someone with a big vocal sound (*ch'ǒng*), you see. And, to get rid of

PC
A = D3

E(G) → A

CGA

soft

louder

soft

swell to vibrato (slow and wide)

free-rhythm...

louder

soft

CC

♩ = 174

louder

gradual fade

softer

swell to vibrato (slow and wide)

AC

ST

♩ = 210

soft

gradual fade to nothing

louder

swell to vibrato (slow and wide)

D

louder

soft

Example 17. M19's *menari* chanting of PC, CC, and ST, with distinctive features and building-block patterns indicated.

miscellaneous thoughts (*chamnyōm*), you have to chant loudly, so your voice fills your ears." Although she has maintained a close long-term relationship with a famous exponent of *pōmp'ae* and, as a novice, used to listen attentively to Hwaam's recordings, elements from those sources are barely perceptible in her present-day chant. As she acknowledges: "Now I have my own style." Her style is characterized by the extensive application of various crisply executed ornamental cells, bracketed and numbered in blue in Example 18. These are articulated in triplet form within PC (in sync with the bell's triplet rhythms), in duplet form in ST, and as a mixture of triplets and duplets within CC. She enhances the rhythmic interest by playfully switching between these cells, such that the rapid elements (sixteenth notes) appear at varying points in relation to the beat—sometimes falling on the main beat, other times on the offbeat, and occasionally evoking a jaunty syncopation (especially via ornaments 1 and 4). Another distinctive feature of this monk's style is her tendency to focus on the pitches C, D, and E for extended periods before returning only briefly to A (boxed in green), with high G only ever appearing

within rapidly executed ornamentation. To facilitate identification of ornamental detail, it was necessary to slow this recording down, which revealed that the highest pitch is sometimes F# (instead of G), specifically, when executed as a rapid upward leap between two Ds.

PC

A = F3 A cDc EDC

CC

♩ = 218

ST

♩ = 236 meandering between E, D and C

meandering between E, D and C

Example 18. M20's *menari* chanting of PC, CC, and ST, with prevalent ornamental cells bracketed in blue, primary building-block shapes boxed in red and magenta, and relatively rare returns to A boxed in green.

M21 also fosters an ornamentation-rich style of *menari*-based chant. Like M20, he playfully switches between a variety of ornamental patterns involving sixteenth notes and grace notes placed at different points in relation to the beat. His most favored cells are bracketed and numbered in blue in Example 19, where patterns 4 and 5, and 3 and 6, are

inverted versions of one another. However, in most respects, M21's style is very different from M20's. He executes the grace notes on the beat, consistently accents the first pulse of every pair, and chants very loudly throughout, almost bellowing in the center of his baritone range. Furthermore, while M20 meanders extensively around the pitches C, D, and E before finally returning to A, M21 remains very much fixated on A; to show the true extent of his A-fixation, all instances of the pitch A are highlighted in Example 19. In these three extracts, there is actually only one point where he departs from A (boxed in magenta) and, elsewhere in the service also, such departures are rare. Collectively, these

PC

A = G3 all on-beat

CC

♩ = 145

ST

♩ = 208

Example 19. M21's *menari* chanting of PC, CC, and ST, with all instances of the pitch A highlighted in red, key building-block cells boxed in blue, and other characteristic features indicated.

characteristics lend his chant a pronounced driving quality. In conversation, this monk explained that he had come to forge this style because it “matches my personal propensities (*sŏnghyang*).” Over the course of 30 years spent chanting intensively in various temples, he has “personally experienced” that densely applying these particular ornaments and patterns (*karak*) “stimulates devotion.”

M22 is the final monk to use *menari* pitch material throughout the service. As shown in Example 20, he demonstrates yet another approach: treating D, A, and E as the main pitches, he steadfastly focuses on one of these for a while before moving onto another, traveling in step via the less important pitches of C and G. Meanwhile, this monk's delivery is remarkably forceful and rough—at times, fervent to the point of seeming rather aggressive (reminding these authors of certain football chanting), despite the temple's rather small hall and congregation.

CC
 ♪ = 165
 A = C#3

ST
 ♪ = 179

unusual pattern

unusual pattern

especially forceful delivery, with hoarse rasp

Example 20. M22's *menari* chanting of CC and ST, with focal pitches boxed and other notable features indicated.

Turning now to consider the other five-note modes: M23 is the only monk to employ an E–G–A–B–C mode, using it consistently throughout the service while chanting at a rather slow pace, in an unchanging dynamic at the center of his baritone range, and with a markedly nasal sonority. Because he treats E, A, and C as the structurally important pitches and also employs G, something of *menari*'s flavor remains. However, his complete avoidance of D and frequent explorations of the relationship between C and its neighbor B—identified via red boxes in Example 21 (below)—give his chant other flavors also. Most obviously, these features conjure up associations with the aforementioned *yukchabaegi* mode (E–A–B–C). This monk also tends to treat the pitches A and G as a pair, and his most commonly employed building-block cells using these notes are bracketed and numbered in light blue in Example 21, where cells 1 to 4 involve a mixture of eighth and sixteenth notes and cells 6 to 9 involve quarter and eighth notes.

While chanting, he subjects certain cells to simple transformative processes of variation and extension. An obvious instance of this is highlighted in Example 21 (through dark blue brackets); here, cell 1 is varied and extended to become a much-favored longer melodic pattern (A→G→E→G→A).

PC

A = Eb3 C/B sliding

Na-mu-ō po-ō-bo-ō

CC

♩ = 164

ST

♩ = 166

Example 21. M23's five-note (E–G–A–B–C) chanting of PC, CC, and ST, with distinctive C/B interplay boxed in red, A/G building-block cells bracketed and numbered in light blue, and a transformative process turning A/G into A→G→E→G→A bracketed in dark blue.

Only two monks in our sample (M24 and M25) employ the well-known *kyōnggi-je* major pentatonic mode (also known as *kyōngt'ori*), particularly associated with folksongs from Seoul and the surrounding Kyōnggi Province and featuring the pitches E–F#–A–B–C# (Chōn Chiyōng 2013). M24 uses it extensively, most significantly for ST, although he also employs other modes elsewhere, including an unusual E–F#–A–B–C mode for CC (which we encountered in no other monks' chanting) and *menari* for PC. Throughout the service, he enhances his chant with diverse complex ornamental details. As shown in Example 22 (below), he is very creative in his treatment of building-block patterns, subjecting them to contraction, expansion, variation and embellishment while ensuring that they fit well with the text and conform to the mode in use; compare, for example, his various C#, B, A / C, B, A / C, A patterns (boxed in green).

ST

♩ = 210
A = E \flat 3

CC

♩ = 126

PC

EA (with C) CA ACAGE

Example 22. M24's *kyōnggi-je* (E-F \sharp -A-B-C \sharp) rendition of ST, his unusual E-F \sharp -A-B-C rendition of CC, and his *menari* rendition of PC, with building-block patterns boxed in various colors.

As shown in Example 22 (above), M24's chant is imbued with a markedly folk song-like quality and, in our conversation, he himself identified "making the chant into a song (*norae*)" as a defining feature of his approach. He further explained that the chant becomes "more engaging" when it "has distinctive elements in it," when "the things you do change from moment to moment," and when "you accentuate the feel of the rhythm." As he put it: "Sounds from the heart, bubbling up from within, are attractive to people, aren't they?" Very unusually and rather playfully, he implements several abrupt changes of tempo in CC (indicated above). The small group of devotees who were present during the service seemed a little perplexed at such moments, taking a few seconds to regain synchrony. Interestingly, during conversation also, this monk was fond of telling jokes and elaborate stories.

PC

A = E \flat 3

ST

♩ = 171

Example 23. M25's *kyönggi-je* (E-F#-A-B-C#) chanting in PC and *menari* chanting in ST, with his highly distinctive applications of subharmonic singing technique bracketed in red.

Meanwhile, M25 employs the *kyönggi-je* mode only rarely, for example, for the final articulation of the PC incantation, as shown in Example 23. Here, he uses similar building-block patterns to M24, boxed in blue, green, and red. Elsewhere, he employs various other modes, including an E-G-A-B-D mode for the first part of PC, *menari* for ST (also included above), and just two notes (A and C) for CC. This monk's chanting is perhaps the most distinctive of all: throughout the service, he frequently applies the vocal technique of subharmonic singing, so the central A is displaced to an octave lower. Instances of this technique are bracketed in red in Example 23.

To our knowledge, subharmonic singing remains undocumented within any field of traditional Korean music-making, so we expected this monk (M25) to be drawing influence from other cultures—perhaps from the chanting of the Tibetan Gyuto order, which has been amply recorded and publicized. However, in discussion, he claimed not to have encountered the technique elsewhere and seemed surprised to hear of it. Rather, he explained that his voice had initially become husky because he naturally has a hot body constitution (*ch'ejiil*) but consumed an abundance of heating foods and traditional medicines.¹⁴ While undertaking long periods of chanting in that condition, he had

¹⁴ Still today, many Koreans adhere to the theories and treatments of traditional Korean medicine.

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The first staff contains three phrases of music with lyrics underneath: "Na-a-mu", "ka-a-ri - i", and another phrase. Above the first phrase is the annotation "F#AB E", above the second is "EAB E", and above the third is "EAB E". Green boxes highlight specific building-block patterns in each phrase. The second staff contains a phrase with the annotation "EAB E" above it, followed by a section marked "free-rhythm". A red box highlights the articulation of G# in the first phrase of the second staff.

Example 24. M13’s use of an E–F#–G#–A–B mode for the delivery of PC, with building-block patterns and articulation of G# indicated.

noticed that the low notes would occasionally emerge of their own accord, and then, over time, those notes became more prolonged and controlled as he relaxed and focused his attention on the sound. Eventually, they became a key defining characteristic of his personal style, which he of course acknowledged to be highly distinctive.

The final five-note mode encountered in our sample is E–F#–G#–A–B, which appears only once. M13 uses it in his delivery of PC, articulating the pitch G# just once, though very conspicuously; see Example 24 (above). Example 24 also shows how this monk adapts his much-favored ascending E→A→C shape (boxed in dark green in Example 10) into E→A→B and F#→A→B for use in this new modal framework, and indicates his unusual breaking-up of the words of “*namu*” and “*kari*.”

Six-Note Chanting

Five monks in our sample (M26–M30) extensively employ a six-note mode, in all cases comprising the pitches E–G–A–B–C–D. However, yet again, each monk treats these pitches rather differently, favoring different building-block patterns, contrasting tempi, and varied vocal techniques.

M26 consistently articulates the pitch B much less frequently than the other pitches, and only within the context of certain descending patterns; in Example 25, each instance of B is highlighted in green. Nevertheless, B remains indispensable, prominent in one of his most characteristic building-block patterns (boxed in red), which appears at the beginning of the service for the text “[These are] the Buddha’s true words for cleaning the mouth of karma” (“*Chöngguöṗ chinön*”) and then again during ST. In common with M20 (see Example 18 above), M25 has a penchant for rapid triplet rhythms, using them beyond solo chanting sections like PC (where they synchronize with the bell’s triplet rhythms) to include them in congregational chant too. As can be seen in Example 25, he employs a wide range of building-block cells to navigate between pitches and evoke

CC

♩ = 240
A = E♭3

ST

♩ = 216

PC

Example 25. M26's six-note (E–G–A–B–C–D) chanting of CC, ST, and PC, with his preferred larger-scale shapes boxed in various colors, and the rarely articulated pitch B highlighted in green.

melodic and rhythmic interest, and yet his chant demonstrates just a small number of larger-scale shapes (boxed in various different colors).

As can be seen, this monk (M26) consistently chants at a rapid pace, packing in a great deal of melodic and rhythmic movement with a strong sense of urgency. During our discussion, we noted that he also speaks at a very fast pace, using typically rapid-fire South Kyōngsang Province dialect, and he himself pinpointed urgency as a defining feature of his character more generally:

My character is straightforward—thinking and acting in a beeline—and I'm fast as well, you see. All my movements are rapid too. There's an urgency in everything I do . . . When I'm chanting alone, if there's something else to attend to or I've got other rituals to perform, I'm watching the clock and I do it really quickly. Or I can go more slowly—though my 'slowly' is someone else's 'medium'.

Like M26's chant, M27's possesses a strong *menari* flavor. As shown in Example 26, she similarly articulates the pitch B only rarely (highlighted in green). However, unlike M26 and the various other monks employing these same six pitches, M27 also places very little emphasis on D (highlighted in red); usually, she only touches upon it very briefly within the context of a distinctive upward-sweeping building-block pattern (boxed in red). Meanwhile, she places particular emphasis on the pitches A, G, and E, relying extensively on a small number of closely related building-block cells (bracketed and numbered in blue). While chanting, she mainly shifts her pitch-focus between A, E (boxed in magenta), and C (boxed in blue), although there are also rare moments of focus on D and G (bracketed in black). Like other monks, she favors certain melodic shapes; indeed, if one compares the first staff-line of CC, ST, and PC in Example 26, one can see that she traces much the same melodic journey in all of them.

CC
 ♩ = 190
 A = F3

low E ACDA D G

ST
 ♩ = 230

1 4 3 2 D cont... 0:45 modulation up to 'B'

PC

G# free-rhythm Na - - a - mu

Example 26. M27's six-note (E–G–A–B–C–D) chanting of CC and ST and four-note (E–G–A–C) chanting of PC, with the rarely articulated pitches B and D highlighted (in green and red), key building-block cells bracketed in blue, a highly distinctive pattern boxed in red (A, C, D, A), and pitch-focuses on C and low E boxed in blue and magenta, respectively.

A particularly unusual feature in M27's chant (above) is her application of an upward modulation, which we never heard any other monks apply. During lengthy passages of congregational chanting, such as ST, she periodically injects a boost of energy by raising her patterning up a single degree, so the central tone becomes B (actual pitch G)—the same technique employed in some pop songs. After a short while—always less than ten seconds in the services we attended—she reverts to treating A as the central tone. An instance of this is included at the end of ST in Example 26, above. Throughout the daily service, she chants with a bright upbeat quality, which she herself describes as “song-like” (despite it being positioned towards the bottom of her alto range). Maintaining a brisk pace throughout, she begins each note with a slight attack then quickly releases the pressure and applies a tight narrow vibrato, giving her chant a distinctive personal aesthetic. Finally, it is worth noting her single articulation of the pitch G# in PC, derived from the aforementioned *hossori* style (see Example 14 above).

The final three monks in our sample (M28–M30) treat these six pitches (E–G–A–B–C–D) in fairly similar ways, as can be seen in Example 27, showing their renditions of ST. Specifically, most patterning centers on the pitches A and C; B appears much less often, either as a downward passing note between C and A or in sliding alternation with its close neighbor C (boxed in blue); G appears only rarely, usually as a passing note in descent to low E; low E serves as a lower structural pillar; and high D and high E constitute the upper register, which the monks periodically ascend to and focus on (boxed in magenta) before returning to the home tones of A and C. Nevertheless, there are various points of difference between these monks' personal styles, some of which are indicated in red.

M28 $\text{♩} = 208$
 $A = B2$ detached extended focus on low E

M29 $\text{♩} = 196$
 $A = F3$ C/B

M30 $\text{♩} = 167$ slower varied ornamentation (including triplets)

$E \rightarrow A$ heightened speech unusual patterning: $A \rightarrow E$ (x 4)

triplet ornamentation

extended focus on low E

Example 27. M28, M29, and M30's chanting of ST, with C/B pattering boxed in blue, high-register (E/D) pattering boxed in magenta, and obvious points of difference indicated in red.

Chanting at a significantly faster pace at the bottom of his baritone range, M28 spends more time at the mode's lower end, on low E. Meanwhile, he articulates many syllables in a sharply detached way (though with weak attack) and delivers his high-pitched phrase (boxed in magenta) in a heightened-speech style. These same qualities permeate all of his chanting; see also his rendition of PC in Example 28. In conversation, he explained that he had experienced various long-term health problems, which had

detached

heightened speech

Na - a-mu - u po - o-bo

C/B

ka-ri-da-ri ta - t'a

Example 28. M28's chanting of PC, with annotations pinpointing distinctive features.

influenced the development of his chanting style, encouraging him to limit the strain he puts on his voice.

Chanting at a slightly slower pace in the center of his tenor range and favoring perfectly smooth transitions from syllable to syllable, M29 includes the pitches B and D more abundantly, with alternation between C and B being especially favored. As mentioned earlier, he employs several other modes over the course of the service, including an unusual E–F#–A–B mode for PC (see Example 12 above). Meanwhile, chanting at a significantly slower tempo than M28 and M29, M30 applies more extensive and varied ornamentation (identified in Example 27, above). Of particular note is her application of triplet patterning to add rhythmic interest and enhance forward momentum. In conversation, she explained that her chanting style has changed enormously from what it used to be when she was a novice over ten years earlier, and her patterns are indeed vastly more complex than the in-house style fostered in the temple where she once trained (demonstrated by M3 in Example 4). As she put it: “I’ve developed my own way of doing it—just through doing it, by putting my whole heart into it and aiming for total immersion . . . You can feel when a strongly vibrating sound (*ullim*) is generated, one that is richly imbued with spiritual force.”

The preceding analysis reveals that the Chogye sect does indeed accommodate a wide variety of chanting styles. Beyond the various in-house styles (*chibanje*) fostered in the largest temples and demonstrated by the novices’ chanting (M2, M3, M7, M9, and M12), we find a myriad of personal styles that vary enormously in regards to all aspects of delivery. Had our sample been even larger, we would doubtless have encountered an even greater abundance of styles. In another temple that we visited, for instance, we met a monk who chanted very slowly at the bottom of her low alto range using wide vibrato and an extraordinary constellation of pitches: A–B \flat –C#–E. However, very unusually, that temple does not include ST and PC in their service, so we did not include her style in our

analysis. Meanwhile, we encountered further fascinating chanting in other temples where, unfortunately, we could not record. So, our sample probably reveals just the ‘tip of the iceberg’ regarding stylistic diversity within Chogye sect chanting.

The variation evinced within our sample is so great that it would make little sense to attempt to extrapolate a shared aesthetic. Rather, an inevitable result of bringing these diverse chanting styles into proximity under the same analytical lens is that one gains a strong sense of clearly differentiated individualism, where each monk stands apart from the others owing to salient markers of distinctiveness. As a conclusion to this music-analytical section, it is worth revisiting some of the most distinctive features: M1’s unornamented concentration on the pitch A; M4’s reliance on an unusual mode (E–A–B) and short bursts of wide vibrato; M5’s low-pitched quasi-mechanical delivery using only the pitches G–A–B; M8’s extreme speed; M11’s extensive articulation of a rapid leaping motif (E→C→A); M13’s slow pace and triplet patterning going against the wooden bell’s pulses; M14’s unusually dense and varied ornamentation; M15’s reliance on a very unusual mode (E–G#–A–B); M16’s *hossori* delivery and occasional ‘bluesy’ flattening of E; M18’s meandering contours and dynamic ebbs and surges; M19’s evocations of sorrowful emotion; M20’s jaunty rhythms, distinctive ornaments, and lengthy sojourns away from A; M21’s fixation on A within densely ornamented driving patterning; M22’s roughly fervent delivery; M23’s nasal sonority and extensive sliding between C and B; M24’s folksong-like melodies and ornamentation, often employing an E–F#–A–B–C# mode; M25’s subharmonic vocal technique; M26’s urgent delivery and rapid triplet patterning; M27’s tight vibrato, unusual handling of D, and applications of modulation; M28’s detached articulation of syllables; and M29’s use of diverse modes, including the unusual E–F#–A–B.

This study will now turn to explore the formative factors underlying this state of affairs: how does it come to be that the Chogye sect monks chant in such different ways? To answer this question, one has to examine the monks’ paths from novice to senior—again drawing extensively from their own testimonies, simply because we have found no other studies exploring the processes through which they learn to chant and forge their own personal approaches. As the monks’ accounts will reveal, Chogye sect monastic culture begins by forcing strict conformity on the novice. However, later on, ample opportunities open up for the individual to pursue their own practices and expression in line with their true nature.

LEARNING TO CHANT AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF PERSONAL STYLE

Some monks enter the monastic life as very young children, chanting on a daily basis from the outset. One monk we met during an earlier research project in 2011 had first entered the monastery at the age of five, soon finding that chanting was “like a mother tongue, as natural as breathing or eating.” Another monk recalled: “I was raised from childhood in the temple. . . growing up listening to chant several times every day. So, as a child of primary school age, I wasn’t singing children’s songs: for me, it was chant” (M40). Such child monks usually remain in the same temple for many years before undertaking compulsory training. Those individuals often asserted that the chant style they had emulated as children remained deeply embedded within their psyche. As one monk put it: “From when I was a little child, I learned in this little temple from the old monk. So, when I went to undertake official training . . . I was already doing that style and I wasn’t influenced by the other monks at all” (M33). For people entering the temple later in life, however, apprehending and reproducing patterns was identified as more of a challenge.

The monks’ compulsory training lasts four years, taking place in a *kangwŏn* institute, situated within the precincts of a head temple. As a novice, you learn through “living the monk’s life until your body gets used to it” (M20), and “because chanting is an integral part of the temple’s spiritual discipline and you do it every day, you naturally learn it” (M34). Here, the learning processes are founded on imitation, as indicated in the following monks’ aphorism: “Through listening, your ears open up; through reciting your mouth opens up. In this way, you absorb it into yourself” (M33). Learning through imitation mainly takes place during ritual, with the novices listening to the older monks. There is no need for any theorization:

You come to know things through being with them. When you’re bowing and chanting . . . you can feel when the energy (*ki*) around you is strong. We learn through that. You can directly feel the age and wisdom of the elders in your body, just through being next to them. Explanation isn’t necessary. When chanting, you can tell if the syllables are matching the beat, whether you’re tone deaf or not . . . You can tell whether an interval is a whole tone or half tone, without being able to name it as such. (M40)

Several monks remembered focusing their attention primarily on individuals who were their seniors by just a few years, standing nearer to them in the ritual space. The institutes typically operate a “*sabyŏng saje*” system, wherein ‘older brothers’ or ‘older sisters’ who entered the temple in previous years are allocated as mentors and models to newer novices (here, ‘older’ having nothing to do with age). “When I started, it was their voices I listened to at the very beginning — roughly copying what my ‘older brothers’ did” (M4).

Because learning takes place communally during rituals, the novice’s chant develops towards conformity—specifically, towards the in-house style (*chibanje*) fostered as a matter of house custom (*kap’ung*):

When you’re doing it alone, your own personal melodies can arise. But when you’re together with others, you manipulate your melodies to match them. Because you’re continuously repeating, you naturally come to match. (M39)

The term “*t’akma*” originally refers to the chipping away of a rock or precious stone into a beautiful shape and it is sometimes used by monks to describe this phenomenon of individuals cooperating in mutual cultivation, be it in the context of a debate or an activity like chanting:

If you observe people chanting together, you’ll see that, either knowingly or not, they are involved in a *t’akma* relationship. If someone is ‘sparking’ too much—for example, chanting too loudly, not matching the pulse, or singing strange pitches—that person will receive little signals from others to guide them through the parts that aren’t being done right. Standardization and harmonization happen through these processes. (M1)

In their interviews, many monks alluded to the strict discipline that typically pervades all aspects of the novice’s life, the following account being typical:

Close the doors as quietly as possible, don’t talk to devotees . . . There are between 250 and 350 rules like that. It’s very much like being in the army. If you’re late by one minute, it’s 108 bows, and if you’re later it’s 1000. Why? To instill a humble heart (*hashim*). And when there are lots of people all close together, you need lots of rules to establish order, don’t you? That’s what made me what I am today. (M20)

This emphasis on order and conformity clearly extends to chanting. One monk who had trained in Haeinsa, recalled: “If you got a note wrong, you’d be punished. You’d have to do penitence and confession (*ch’amhoe*). When on your own, you can do as you please but not in the group” (M34)—the latter part of this statement being especially revealing by alluding to the opening up of individual freedom experienced on leaving the group.

Novice monks also commonly experience a great deal of pressure to memorize the chant texts quickly and completely:

We were told: ‘you have to memorize this much by such-and-such a time, when you will recite it in front of me without reading’. To help with the study, we would write the text on our arms with a pen and read it while doing other work around the temple. . . It took me fifteen days to memorize the Great Dhāraṇī part of Ch’önsugyöng in that way [‘ST’ in the preceding analysis]. A quick person can do it in a week. Repeating and repeating under my breath while doing hard labor like laying cement and carrying big bags of rice. If you just do the work, it hurts a lot. But if you pray and study while working, it’s better. (M20)

To complement learning-through-doing, the training system now offers chant lessons, though only for an hour or so a week. Here, the chant tutor demonstrates a passage, sometimes tracing the contour in the air with a finger or drawing the contour on a whiteboard, and the novices repeat it back as closely as possible. According to one eminent chant teacher, in this context also, there is very little theorization, no specialized terminology, and no recourse to a widely shared notation system: “I don’t have any theoretical knowledge about music, you see . . . I chant to them and they repeat it back, [while] I shout out ‘go up’, ‘go down’, or whatever” (M39). Towards the end of their training, the novices are instructed to take turns at leading the daily services. So, even in the most splendid temples, one will often hear services being led in a very simple unornamented fashion, as demonstrated earlier in the renditions of M2, M3, M7, M9, and M13.

On leaving the *kangwŏn*, many monks choose to devote time to meditation (usually in a monks' meditation center, *sŏnwŏn*), many proceed with text-based study either in a Buddhist university (*sŏnggadae*) or study center (*yulwŏn*), and some decide to devote their attentions to officiating in rituals instead. Since long ago, leading figures have emphasized gaining wisdom through balancing these complementary practices, with Chinul (1158–1210) especially celebrated for promoting such an approach (see Buswell 1983). However, we were frequently reminded:

Nowadays, there are lots of monks in the meditation rooms who don't see any reason to chant . . . They just need to hear the strikes of the bamboo stick (*chukpi*) [marking the start and end points of the meditation session].
(M11)

But for those monks who decide to devote themselves to officiating, it is at this point, on leaving the training center, that “one truly begins to find one's own chant vocal sound (*yŏmbul ch'ŏng*)” (M14) or “personal style” (*chagihwa*). From this point, one is no longer obliged to conform to an in-house style.

Many monks acknowledged drawing great influence from commercially available recordings of celebrated chanters like Kim Sŏnggong, Hwaam, Pŏmch'ŏl, and Yŏngin during their early development. For example, one middle-aged monk recalled:

I learned from a cassette tape of . . . Hwaam back in the 90s, listening through earphones and practicing by copying, over and over again, even if I was sleepy or lying down. That recording was the central pillar of my learning, though later it became unnecessary because I developed my own thing . . . I don't sound anything like him now. (M20)

This same monk went on to stress that the process of drawing from other sources should always be selective: “you should only ever learn what is necessary to you personally—only the parts that move your heart. That's how it is in chant and in everything, isn't it?” Several other monks similarly highlighted the selective nature of their learning, explaining that they only ever adopted elements that complemented their pre-existing qualities: “I listened to lots of tapes in the 90s, selecting what would fit my style. But even if a monk's chanting was really good, if it didn't match my feel, it was useless to me” (M14).

After leaving the training center, most Chogye monks travel quite extensively. Within the sect, itinerancy has always been highlighted as an effective aid towards attaining and spreading learning and wisdom, with the individual also afforded freedom and responsibility to pursue their own course of spiritual discipline (*subaeng*). The following account illustrates this:

Initially, I started out in a big temple . . . Then, if you walk for 10/20 mins up from that temple, you reach a women’s meditation center. I did three years there. Then I went to a study center (*yulwŏn*) to learn about the Buddha’s life and achievements. Then, I did six more years of meditation. And then I got really ill and spent the next five years just trying to stay alive. After that, I was chanting in this temple here, chanting in that temple there, and chanting all over. I’ve stayed in so many temples before coming here. Do I have to name them all for you? [Laughter]. (M27)

Another monk pointed out that the state of “no constancy” (*musang*), characterizing the monk’s life and, in fact, all phenomena, is also registered in chant practice: “As monks, we travel anywhere we like, to any temple. And as we travel about, we don’t stick with the sound we originally started with. There is no constancy” (M29).

In some small peripheral temples, the head monk stays for a long time and also administers the daily services. However, much more commonly, the services are led by a visiting monk who stays on a fixed contract as a so-called “officiating monk” (*nojŏn sŭnim*) or “prayer monk” (*kido sŭnim*), chanting extensively for 100 days, 1000 days, or some other duration, before moving elsewhere. Hence, one frequently encounters comments like the following when chatting with a temple’s longer-term residents:

We’ve only had our new prayer monk for a few days. The previous one, who was here for ages, has gone. So, now it sounds pretty different. It’s different for each individual, you see—each monk having their own way [of chanting]. (M41)

This frequent movement of monks around the country has led to the current situation where “there are no regional differences anymore. Now it’s all about differences on the level of the individual” (M42)—a fact confirmed by our study, which encompassed all eight mainland provinces but yielded no instances where the temple’s location had a bearing on the monk’s chanting style.

Nevertheless, several monks did admit to modifying their chanting a little to accommodate the preferred practices of more insistent local devotees:

There are tens of thousands of differences between each monk's ways of chanting. At the same time, in a temple like this [with a big community of fervent devotees] . . . they have certain preferences . . . Here, the speed is very fast. You can tell that my speaking voice is a bit slow, can't you? In other places, I've delivered the . . . texts in my own leisurely way. But I came here just a week ago and discovered what was expected. The devotees actively approached me and asked me to do it quicker, to the extent that my gong-striking hand has started to hurt a lot! (M1)

Other monks, however, stressed that they tended not to make such concessions. One particularly uncompromising individual, for example, responded dismissively to our question about molding their patterning to harmonize better with others: "No. The followers have to match my tastes. I'm the leader, so they must follow me. I deliver the offerings and praise to Buddha and they're my followers" (M20).

Over the course of many years, while travelling around from temple to temple, leading services, and sometimes undertaking other pursuits, each monk's way of chanting inevitably transforms, assimilating influences while, at the same time, morphing to better suit their personal character, aesthetic sensibilities, skills, and constitution. As the foregoing analysis suggests, the notion that one should strive to adhere to particular models—that certain monks have discovered a key constellation of traits that will work well for all—appears to be rather weak among the monks. Rather, as was mentioned earlier, monks often stress the benefits of appreciating sounds as they are, as opposed to measuring them against an ideal. Accordingly, one is more likely to encounter the following opinion, as stated by M25, whose chanting was especially distinctive (featuring subharmonic singing):

Everybody has their distinctive qualities (*t'üksöng*), don't they, and they should make the most of them. That's the best thing, isn't it? There's no need to do others' things. If you make the most of your distinctive qualities, that works. (M25)

Underlying this understanding is an acknowledgement of the subjective nature of interpretation and experience. As another monk put it:

Negative judgement arises when there isn't a match. That's all there is to it. There's no . . . shared understanding regarding what qualities are 'good'. That varies from time to time, person to person, taste to taste. (M34)

In our discussions with the monks, we were often reminded how pervasive this theme of subjectivity is in Buddhist thought (see Sungbae Park 1983). For instance, M28 directed our attentions to the well-known aphorism “*Il ch'e yu shim cho*” (“everything depends solely on one's heart”) from the Flower Garland Sutra (Hwaōmgyōng, Avataṃsaka Sūtra); he explained that, accordingly, because everyone's heart is different, so their thoughts and perceptions of what works well in chant to aid spiritual development will vary. Following the same line of thought, M1 explained to us that every individual is inevitably bound to pursue their own route towards enlightenment, here also alluding to the necessity of itinerancy:

There are innumerable ways to get to Seoul, aren't there? Each person starts out from a different place, uses different modes of travel, goes by different routes, at different speeds. There is no single best way.

So, as this monk clarified by further extending the metaphor of traveling, it is only to be expected that each person would develop their own ways of chanting—pursuing a different journey from the start of each phrase to the end, following a different contour, at different tempo, and moving in rather different ways.

As time passes, for each monk, the direction of slow stylistic metamorphosis is guided by deep introspection—the aforementioned twin processes of concentration (*chipjung*) and observation (*kwanch'al*)—sustained over long periods of intensive spiritual discipline (*subaeng*). While chanting the same passages of text over and over again, the individual realizes through experience what details work best to evoke the ideal inner state:

At first, you just follow but then your chant naturally develops as you select influences from the things that appeal the most . . . Since then, I have perseveringly undertaken lots of practice and led a great many services, and my patterns have naturally developed in this direction. I didn't set out to do it though. As you're doing it, you experience for yourself: 'ah, if I do this then it comes out more majestically and I feel more devotion' . . . And with the passing of time, you come to know the meaning and you put your heart

into it. In this way, I've made it myself. Now, if ever I listen to those old recordings again, I can hear that they're very different from what I'm currently doing. (M4)

Some monks stated that, for them, this process of prolonged introspective observation had evoked an “opening up” (*t'wida*) of both effective method and sound quality, wherein they acquired a kind of know-how. For example, one senior monk explained:

When I was a novice, the kind of chant you've just heard didn't come out . . . But time passes and by mastering the inner part of one's mind some kind of method opens up: something in your head develops and, accordingly, changes arise in one's chant patterns, in the whole of one's chanting . . . Simply put: the melodic flavor changes according to one's inner world. If a monk has done a lot of chanting as spiritual discipline, then a kind of fragrance grows in there. (M26)

In conversation, many monks employed the verb “to ripen” (*ikda*) to characterize this process of gradual development:

There's nothing else: Buddhism is something that has to be soaked up slowly. Your sound ripens as you gradually listen and learn. It enters your body naturally, smoothly. It's not about 'Do this!' (M20)

And, eventually, through these various processes, some monks are said to acquire a so-called “blessed voice” (*chabisöng*):

A blessed voice seems to have everything in it. If you chant diligently for a long time, you gather blessings and receive this as a gift (*kap'il*) from the Buddha. It's what you get after chanting for 100-day and 1000-day periods over many years. (M40)

CONCLUSIONS

In this article, we have sought to provide the first ever detailed insider view of Chogyé sect chanting, drawing together the insights of numerous monks regarding chant's objectives and necessary attributes, and giving voice to their testimonies about how chant styles are learned and developed. We have wedded

that enquiry to a detailed musical analysis of the chant itself, examining a diverse range of chanting styles as employed in everyday services across the country. In the latter regard, we have applied an analytical method which we hope may be drawn upon by other researchers—for example, by those undertaking comparative analysis of liturgical practices elsewhere. Specifically, in the interest of approaching an accurate representation of stylistic diversity, we have taken a large sample of individuals (all delivering the exact same text), categorized their practices according to salient criteria (in this case, modal content), and presented a concise style profile for everyone (rather than just a selected few), highlighting the unique constellations of traits that characterize and distinguish their approaches. This analytical method has revealed a surprising degree of stylistic individualism, with broad divergences apparent in the number and constellation of pitches employed (ranging from 1 to 6 and featuring varied pitch-sets); the treatment of those pitches (such that even monks employing the same pitches tend to treat them differently); tempi (from slow to double the speed); vocal style (in line with natural tendencies); articulation (from markedly detached to very smooth); ornamentation (from non-existent to complex, and highly varied in nature); and emotional expression (from joyful to sorrowful, or expressing no emotion whatsoever).

Based on our observations, the following factors appear to be fueling this stylistic individualization within the sect, and we suspect that closely related attitudes, philosophies, and social conditions could lie at the heart of individualism-rich contexts elsewhere also, both religious and non-religious:

- Because chant is treated as a form of spiritual discipline (*subaeng*), functional effectiveness supersedes all other considerations, including superficial aesthetic matters. The overriding question is: does one's chant encourage well-engaged participation, clear articulation of the all-important text, devotion, and single-pointed concentration?
- Within the sect, strong emphasis is placed on individual responsibility and agency. After the philosophical and methodological basics have been forcefully instilled during training, each individual is expected to identify and refine their own preferred methods.

- Buddhist philosophy stresses the subjectivity of perception and evaluation and the co-existence of myriad differing proclivities, while advocating a non-judgmental attitude transcending simple dualistic good/bad categorization. This mindset opens the way for acceptance of diverse individualized forms of expression.
- Over the course of their development, monks encounter a wide array of chant styles, including the in-house styles of larger temples and recordings of celebrated monks, and there is little preventing them from assimilating complementary aspects into their own practice, unconsciously or intentionally.
- As a monk, one is committed to pursuing long-term personal transformation towards actualizing one's already-existing-but-obscured Buddha nature—one's thoughts and behaviors (including chant) morphing away from mere imitation towards becoming a manifestation of one's unique nature. These transformative processes are evidently closely aligned with those of individuation, as explicated by Carl Gustav Jung and other Buddhism-inspired writers (such as Rob Preece 2013).
- Officiating monks chant extensively over the course of many years, often alone or with devotees who are readily amenable to molding their patterning to suit. There is ample time for their chant patterns to morph into line with their personal proclivities.
- Standard chant (*p'yŏng yŏmbul*) lies outside the strictures of the country's cultural preservation system (unlike *pŏmp'ae* melismatic chant), and the patterns themselves have not been fixed by prescriptive notations.

Of course, in many other diversity-rich contexts, competition is identifiable as an additional, very powerful individualization-fueling factor within the mix and, in our previous article about personal style formation, we acknowledged its importance (Mills and Park 2017). There, we detailed how the will to surpass others drives musicians to draw selectively from the broader scene, avoiding certain areas and focusing on others as they seek to enhance their distinctiveness and forge a fulfilling niche for themselves. However, the case of the Chogye sect monks amply demonstrates that, even when people have minimal competitive impetus, their inner individuality is liable to emerge in

external expression as a natural corollary of individuation, just so long as they experience relatively little social pressure to conform.¹⁵

To complete this picture of Chogye sect chanting practice, it is necessary to close by acknowledging that various conformity-fueling initiatives *are* currently in effect, enacted by the sect's headquarters and serving as significant counter-measures against the diversification-fueling forces outlined above. As explained to us by officials working in the headquarters (in 2015 and 2019), the sect has maintained a Board of Chant (Yōmbul Wiwōn) since the mid-1990s, which disseminates mp3s of model *menari* renditions by board-members such as Inmuk, sends out experts to *kangwōn* training institutes to deliver special classes (annually or biannually), and provides compulsory refresher training to chant teachers (annually) and officiating monks (at any point within a five-year period). Since 2011, it has also been encouraging monks to adopt modern Korean translations of the Heart Sutra (published in 2011 and revised in 2013), the “Ch'iljōngnae” praise song (2012), and the Thousand Hand Sutra (2013). From the headquarters' perspective, standardization towards these models—always sensitively presented as guidelines rather than imperatives—is the key to facilitating comfortable communal chanting and ensuring that services are sufficiently attractive and understandable (hopefully, countering the alarming long-term decline of Buddhist ritual participation in the country).

The officiating monks we spoke with often suggested that the headquarters' standardization initiatives were rather too limited in frequency, duration, and forcefulness to have a strong immediate impact on their own deeply ingrained chanting practices. Nevertheless, it was evident to us that they held a consensus view regarding the longer-term trajectory, foreseeing a gradual ironing-out of the kind of stylistic diversity that we have exposed in this article. Differences of opinion clearly existed, however, regarding the time-frame, extent, desirability, and broader implications of such standardisation. We hope that other researchers will join us in this rich field of study, shedding further light on Buddhist monks' everyday chanting practices in Korea and documenting the forthcoming developments.

¹⁵ Relatively few academics have examined how musical activity can function to accelerate and outwardly manifest processes of individuation (for example, Dong Min Kim 2008).

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ONLINE RECORDINGS

Chanting the Thousand Hand Sutra (Ch’önsugyöng):

Hwaam: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4FUwIIQ098>

Inmuk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ESa-1byycRM>

Kim Sönggong: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5xSmn-3CUuc&t=42s>

Kümgang: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i91TWethSnw>

Pömch’öl: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RX7_bUwaRyw

Yöngin: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQg8l35STEY>

Chanting the Heart Sutra (Panyashimgyöng):

Monks of Haeinsa: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4giyze1Pjw8>

Monks of Songgwangsa: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bVXtQGu2clA&t=95s>