what the sutra says

BY JAN PEARSE

This little verse was in the newsletter a while ago as part of the Gyohatsu Nenju – Formal Meal Verses. It is chanted at the end of the meal by the ino. I have also heard it chanted in the dojo at the end of a teaching or a mondo or a short zazen. I think it is a beautiful verse in both English and Chinese.

Sho sekai bon no ge
Shishi kai jiki kun
Jiren kafu jashi
Shin shin jin cho ihi
Kishu rinbu jo son.

Verse of Purity While Abiding in the World
Abiding in this ephemeral world
Like a lotus in muddy water,
The mind is pure and goes beyond.
Thus we bow to Buddha.

During the summer camps this year at La Gendronnière this next verse was chanted before breakfast in the Buddha hall. It is a dharani which is a bit like a mantra and really can't be translated accurately. It is the sound which is important and is said to be a manifestation of ku, our true nature. This dharani calls upon the skills of Idaten, the kitchen deity who protects the monks and nuns. Idaten was guarding the Buddha's ashes and a demon tried to steal them, he chased the demon away and retrieved the ashes. So he represents dealing quickly and efficiently with disasters.

I found this translation on the internet, the Soto school sutra book doesn't translate it. Don't take the translation too literally please!

This dharani is chanted 3 times. It begins quite quickly and is very quick by the end! The symbol ● indicates when a ring of the bell and ◆ a deadened ring of the bell.

Shosai myokichijo darani
No mo san man da moto nan
oha ra chi koto sha
sono nan ● to ji to
en
gya gya gya ki gya ki
un nun shifu ra shifu ra
hara shifu ra hara shifu ra
chishu sa chishu sa chishu ◆
ri chishu ri
sowa ja sowa ja ◆ sen chi gya
shiri ei so mo ko

Disaster-Preventing Dharani
Veneration to all the Buddhas!
The incomparable Buddha-power that banishes suffering
Om!
The Buddha of reality, wisdom, Nirvana!
Light ! Light! Great light, Great light!
With no categories, this mysterious power saves all beings; suffering goes, happiness comes,
Hail!