

A black and white photograph of a dense forest. A path or clearing leads from the bottom left towards the center of the image, disappearing into the woods. The trees are tall and have thick canopies, with sunlight filtering through the leaves in some areas. The overall atmosphere is serene and deep.

# **Jesus of the deep forest**

**Prayers and praises of Afua Kuma**

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of  
Afua Kuma**

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# preface

THERE is a Twi proverb: "Gold is not the only valuable thing in the world". *Jesus of the deep forest* certainly proves the truth of this saying. It uses the language of African customs and proverbs, and African traditions of worship and chieftaincy, to praise the name of Jesus.

The author, Christiana Afua Gyan, better known as Afua Kuma, is a native of Obo-Kwahu, Ghana, and lives at Asempaneye (Atuobikrom) where she has a farm. She is also well known as a skilled traditional midwife. She is a member of the Church of Pentecost.

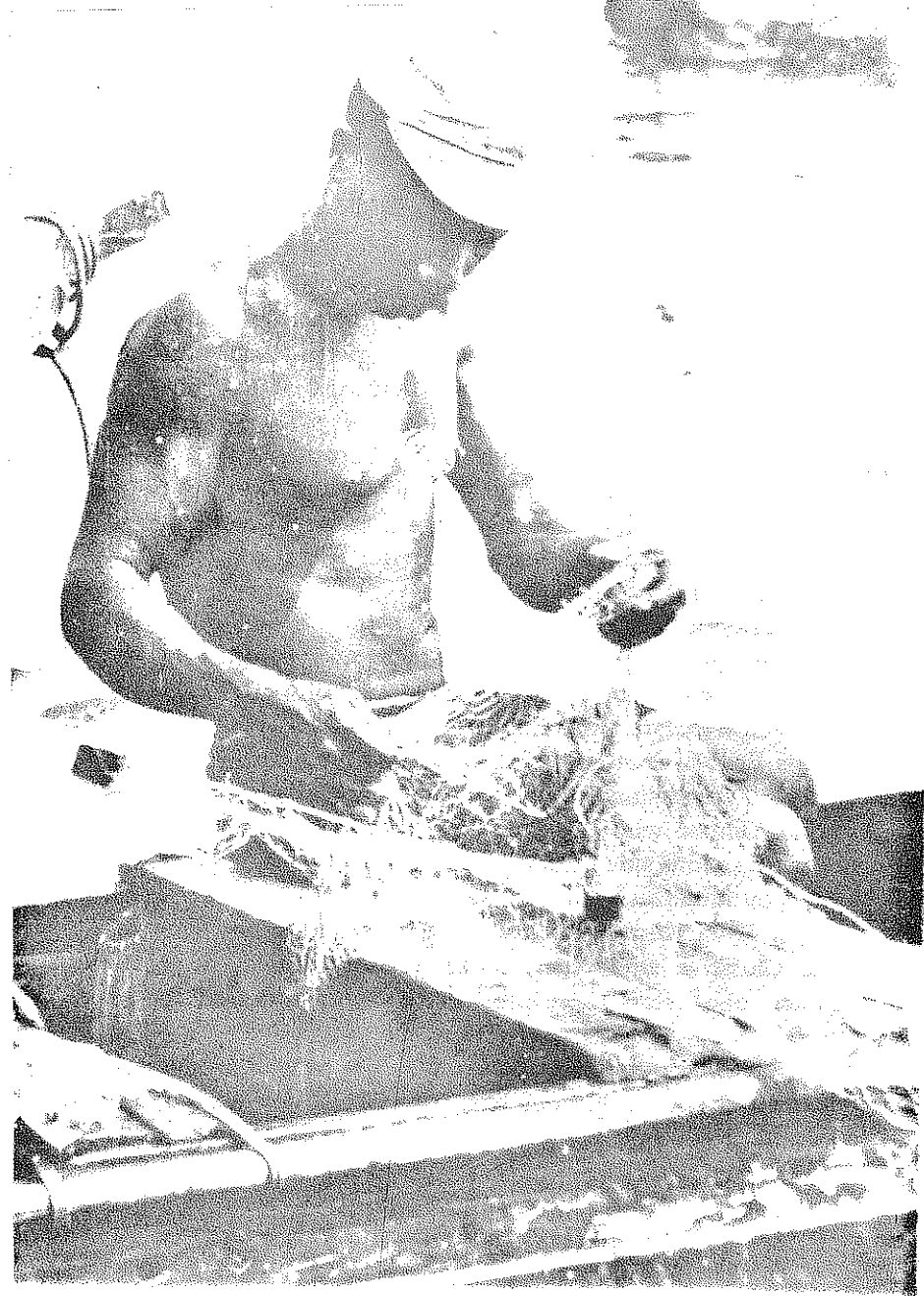
Her prayers and praises in the Twi language were first tape-recorded by Peter Kwasi Ameyaw, then written down in Twi by Vincent Adjepong and Michael Owusu Nimako. They have now been translated into English by Fr Jon Kirby.

This English translation corresponds page by page with the original Twi version, which has been published in the same format. Those who can read Twi are encouraged to study the two versions side by side.

As you read this book you will soon see that God has given Madam Afua Kuma remarkable gifts, enabling her to praise Jesus Christ in a way that makes a deep impression on the listener. She offers these prayers and praises to God for his glory.

We believe readers will derive pleasure as well as spiritual benefit and encouragement from this book. May Jesus' name be praised!

Fr Jon Kirby, S.V.D.



WE are going to praise the name of Jesus Christ.  
We shall announce his many titles:  
they are true and they suit him well,  
so it is fitting that we do this.

All-powerful Jesus  
who engages in marvellous deeds,  
he is the one called Hero — Okatakyl!  
Of all earthly dominions he is the master;  
the Python not overcome with mere sticks,  
the Big Boat which cannot be sunk.

Jesus, Saviour of the poor,  
who brighten up our faces!  
Damfo-Adu: the clever one,  
we rely on you as the tongue relies on the mouth.

The great Rock we hide behind:  
the great forest canopy that gives cool shade:  
the Big Tree which lifts its vines  
to peep at the heavens,  
the magnificent Tree whose dripping leaves  
encourage the luxuriant growth below.

Wonderworker, you are the one  
who has carried water in a basket  
and put it by the roadside  
for the travellers to drink for three days.  
You use the *kono* basket to carry water to the desert,  
then you throw in your net and bring forth fish!  
You use the net to fetch water and put it into a basket.  
We ride in canoes on the water's surface  
and catch our fish!

O Lightning, you who lay low our cities,  
we encourage you, "Come on, come on!"  
with the firing of muskets.  
O Master of Wisdom,  
who have set a trap to catch the wind;  
who bundled it up with lightning,  
and tied the load with a rainbow!

Jesus! You are the one  
who has gone out to save the nations.  
You wear a chief's crown.  
The flag of a conqueror leads you in battle.

O great and powerful Jesus, incomparable Diviner,  
the sun and moon are your *batakari*.  
It sparkles like the morning star.  
Sekyerε Buruku, the tall mountain,  
all the nations see your glory.

You weave the streams like plaited hair;  
with fountains you tie a knot.  
Magician who walks on the sea:  
he arrives at the middle,  
plunges his hand into the deep and takes out a whale!

When he walks in darkness he carries no lamp.  
He is led by the sun and followed by lightning  
as he goes his way.

The spider's web is his fishing line.  
He casts it forth and catches a crocodile.  
He casts his fishing net, and catches birds.  
He sets a trap in the forest and catches fish.  
Holy One!

He is the Thumb, without which we cannot tie a knot.  
O You-who-show-the-way: Akyereskyerokwan!  
You teach us how to prophesy.  
Supporter-of-friends, who come in glory and strength!  
Source-of-great-strength: Okuruakwaban,  
who struck Pharaoh and his army to the ground!  
You are the Eggs of the green mamba,  
which only the wise may gather.

Jesus: you are solid as a rock!  
The green mamba dies at the sight of Jesus.  
Iron rod that cannot be coiled into a head-pad:  
the cobra turns on his back, prostrate before you!  
Jesus, you are the Elephant Hunter, Fearless One!  
You have killed the evil spirit, and cut off its head!  
The drums of the king have announced it in the morning.  
All of your attendants lead the way, dancing with joy.

Tutugyagu: the Fearless One!  
You have pulled the teeth of the viper, and there it lies  
immovable as a fallen tree, on which children play!  
Adubasapon: Strong-armed One!  
You are the one who has tied death to a tree  
so that we may be happy.  
Just as you have done in the days of old,  
today, you continue to work your wonders!

You have put eggs at the lair of the egg-eating snake.  
We went to look and the snake was lying there dead!  
You have left small chicks at the hawk's nest,  
and the hawk has fled, leaving the chicks behind.

Jesus, you are the one who has placed the castrated ram  
at the den of the wolf—and then the wolf has run off,  
leaving its young behind!





The sheep have trampled them and killed them all!  
O Master of signs and wonders: you stretch your hands  
over the desert, and a forest appears!

Okokodurufo: the strong-hearted One,  
whose works are indeed stout-hearted:  
you stand at the mouth of the big gun  
while your body absorbs the bullets  
aimed at your followers.

Owesekramo: the untiring Porter,  
troubled hearts are your headload!  
You are without sin, and have no fear of slander.  
You stand in the sea while you hunt in the forest.  
Hunter, you have gone to the hunt  
and destroyed the ugly beast *kakae*.  
You have made us children happy.

The elders say, "If a man cannot carry a python,  
he doesn't add a viper to lighten his load".  
But Jesus has made of three vipers a head-pad,  
and carried the python to be cast away,  
while strong young men encourage him with drumming.  
Among powerful rifles, you are the Elephant-Gun.  
Jesus enables the hunter to kill the elephant.

Otiberekesedu: mighty one who are our friend,  
who carry thorny sticks and canes,  
you stand amid the briars  
and make a head-pad from the thorns.  
A Wind and a Storm;  
the fiercest of storms are you.

We remove bracelets over our wrists,  
but you pass bracelets through your shoulder!  
You are the Crab which has swallowed three elephants!  
You changed a mouse into a horse and rode on it!

Ogyampanturudu: Hurricane of the rainy season,  
you are the one who tears leaves from the trees,  
and removes dead branches  
as firewood for lazy people.

Ɔɔkɔtobonnuare: the hard-working Farmer,  
who gives food to the carefree in the morning,  
O Pool of great depth, the farmers await you;  
they want to begin their work.

Onyankopɔn Toturobonsu: God, the source of all rain,  
you are the rain which floods us with food.  
Weaving-loom-Kofi, you give us our woven cloths.  
You give us *adwinasa* to wear in the morning.

He gives plenty, even in excess, and to everyone!  
We don't receive your gifts in our left hand,  
O Great One, Ɔkatakɔi;  
But because of your bountiful blessings,  
our right hand is full!

Resplendent, shining-faced Chief of the lepers!  
Helper of the crippled, Guide for the blind!  
Lord Jesus,  
whose eyes blend with sunshine and enlighten the world—  
you see everywhere!

You are the one who lives in the heavens:  
you have written the word of your mouth in your laws.  
We are listening to the good news from your mouth.

O Jesus!

You are the Moon which rises from a hole in the sea;  
your beauty is shown on the ocean.

Chief among teachers,  
through whom we teach our children wisdom!  
Chief among rich men,  
we have come to you to sleep    your rooms of gold.

Mmpowmmeahene and Gyaasehene:  
Chief of many small villages  
and steward of God's household,  
Jesus, who walks on gold dust—  
with great strides he reaches this place,  
while gold-nugget stars lead the way.  
Powerful and wealthy Chief:  
with golden blocks you fashion a wall;  
precious beads are your corner-stones.

Okokurokohene: powerful Chief!  
The sun shines before you, the morning star at your back.

Chief among chiefs, when you stretch forth your hand,  
widows are covered with festive beads  
while orphans wear *kente*!

Ohemmerfo: humble King,  
your words are precious jewels.  
We don't buy them, we don't beg for them;  
you give them to us freely!

Otwentwenko, we are waiting for you,  
And the sick are waiting for medicine.  
O Jesus, you have swallowed death  
and every kind of disease,  
and have made us whole again.

Chief of Lawyers, to whom we bring our complaints;  
you stand at court and defend the poor,  
Chief of Police, a big rifle stands at your side!  
Jesus! You are the greatest warrior among the soldiers.  
You are the Moon of the harvest month  
which gives us our food.  
Prisoners depend on you as the tongue on the mouth.

You are the Breeze which makes us prosper,  
the Wind which blows on us,  
and we gather money on the ground in the morning.

Jesus, you are the Cornerstone,  
the String of good beads,  
whose price is so great that no one can buy you.

You are the one who has eternal life,  
and are the Source of flowing waters.  
It is you who bring success to young men,  
and we go before you holding the Bible.

Jesus, you are on the right and on the left,  
where the sun rises, and where it sets!  
You are the Chief of the rear-guard!  
You are Korobetoe, who live for ever,  
chief of defence and chief of body-guards,  
a friend to old men and women!

A great and shining nation belongs to Jesus;  
the rainbow protects its rampart  
while lightning marches round.  
Signs and wonders open its gates,  
for these are the keys of his kingdom.

One does not have to take a mirror there  
to see one's face:  
the brilliance of the city is his mirror!  
Almighty God, you are a great Chief.  
To you belongs the holy city.  
Truly, it is a glorious city.

Gold nuggets are strewn about,  
while streams of precious beads flow through.

Adontenhene Jesus! the Field Marshal,  
with a gold mirror as protection;  
you guide us,  
and give us lamps of gold to lead the way.

There is a wild noise,  
like that of rushing streams.  
Yet it is not the sound of streams we hear;  
it is the thunder and lightning serenading Jesus!

The wind clutches a golden banner,  
its left arm laden with beads and bracelets of gold,  
as it dances before Jesus' face.

Jesus Christ: you are the Fountain of life,  
the glistening Water-lily of the great swamps!

You play on your golden organs and beckon all chiefs  
who march majestically before you.

The full moon which rises and lights up the earth  
bids your servants come to you.  
And they pass as quietly as cumulus clouds.  
They say they will adore you with harps.

A thousand thousand people give thanks to your name.  
Angels of heaven lift high their praises.  
They say, "Hosanna!"  
Men of the earth; all of them,  
proclaim your name in glory,  
you who cleanse us with your blood.  
Therefore take us and do what you like.

You and I, and the angels of heaven,  
raise up our songs in praise of Jehovah,  
and sing "Hallelujah!" to honour his name.  
Holy One!

We don't use a cutlass to clear a path for Jesus,  
we don't use a "caterpillar" to cut him a road.  
The word of his mouth is our path;  
it is the wide road for nations to travel.

When he wants to go to a town,  
he doesn't ask the way there:  
his own wisdom discerns the right way to go.

When you heed the things of God,  
you need not wear an amulet  
to make your marriage fruitful.  
A woman is struggling with a difficult labour,  
and suddenly all is well.  
The child, placenta and all, comes forth  
without an operation. He is the Great Doctor!  
When he reaches a town, all its secrets are laid bare.  
He is the one who digs a plantain shoot  
and lays it on bare rock in the morning;  
by evening it is full grown with clusters so heavy  
they cannot be carried by men in their prime.

Ntafowayifo: Wonder-worker!  
The streets flow with water though there's no rain!  
Indeed, Jesus, you are amazing!

You take a single grain of corn, grind it, roast it,  
and then go and plant it and, look!  
now the grain has borne fruit, and filled two hundred bags,  
with some left over!

Farmer,  
who generously give to all in need;  
Farmer,  
who slay hunger,  
Only in you will we be satisfied.  
For you are the good parent.

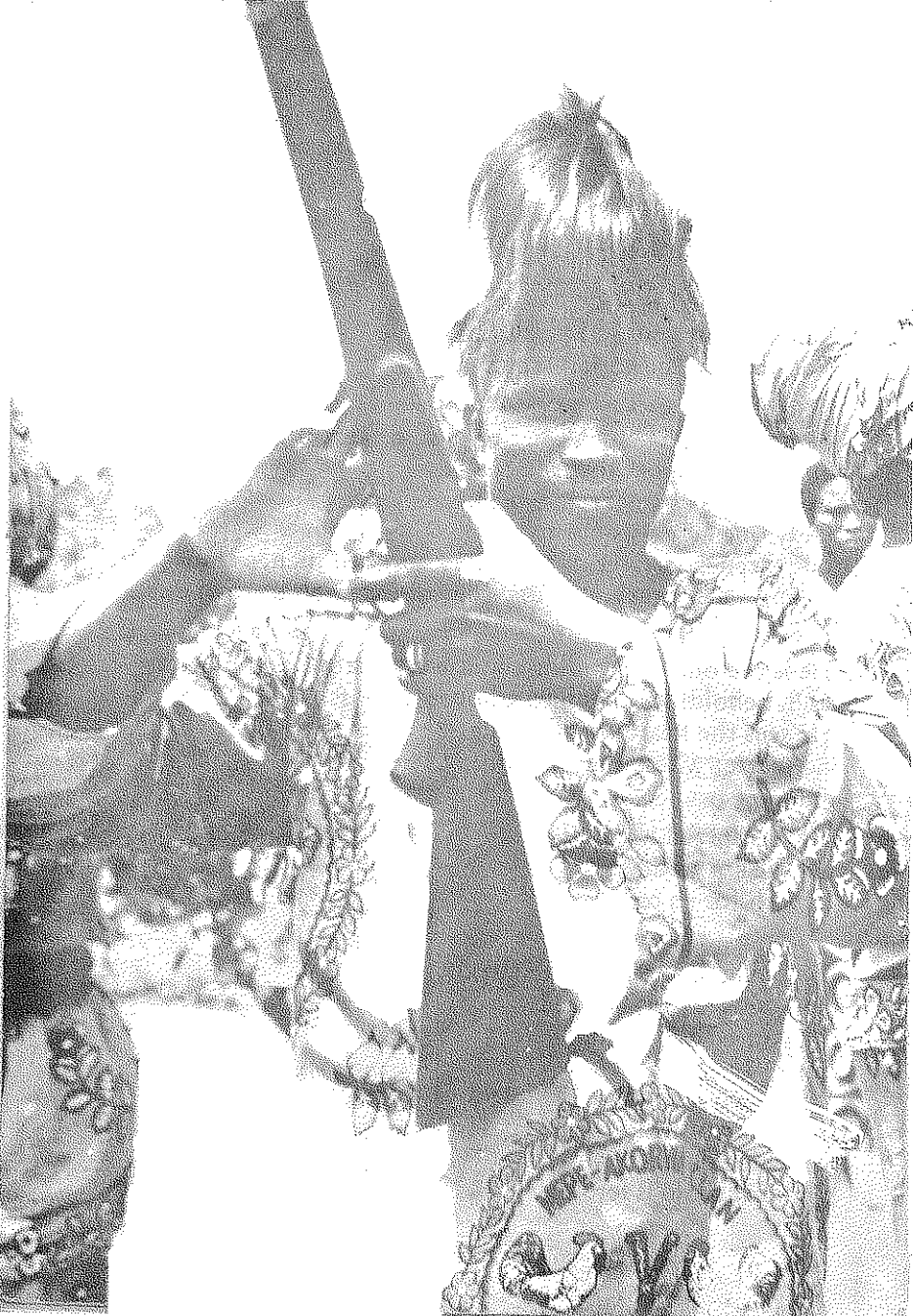
Jesus! you light a bush-fire to clear a farm,  
and look: the oceans are ablaze,  
while the dry grass remains untouched.  
Only one acre was burnt,  
but three days later, it takes five hundred men,  
strong and mighty, to carry the harvest back to the house.

He is the one who builds a house with stone and mortar,  
and, behold! It turns into a house of glass.  
He sees the hearts of all inside,  
no matter where they stand.

He has spread his cloth  
on the sea to dry;  
a cloth for us to wear.

He boiled his food in the stream  
and when it was cooked  
he poured some out  
for us to eat.  
He uses a needle to dig a wild yam.  
It feeds the army of the land  
for three days,  
and still some is left over.





He is the one who enstools chiefs,  
and seats them in their glory.  
"Respect and honour your chiefs," he says,  
"for God has given them glory."

Indeed, this very hour, if he should give the order,  
we would lift our chief up high,  
and carry him on our shoulders.

Jesus! with his strong arm he has taken hold of us.  
Look: we sleep in the midst of murderers.  
Their courage and strength is in their cutlass.  
When a murderer hears the name of Jesus,  
his cutlass becomes a bird and flies away.  
The murderer stands there, impotent.  
Children hold his hands,  
and lead him home,  
playing stringed instruments  
in procession  
before the face of Jesus.

Jesus is the grinding stone  
on which we sharpen our cutlasses,  
before we perform manly deeds.  
We have risen at dawn  
to take up our weapons of war,  
and join the battle.  
Nkrante-boaf: you are the Sword-carrier,  
at the battlefront.

Okatakayi birəmpon: Hero Incomparable:  
By the time we reach the edge of the battle  
the war has already ended.  
We turn back,  
singing his praises.

If you go with Jesus to war,  
no need for a sword or gun.  
The word of his mouth is the weapon  
which makes enemies turn and run.

If we walk with him and we meet with trouble  
we are not afraid.

Should the devil himself become a lion  
and chase us as his prey.  
we shall have no fear;  
Lamb of God!  
Satan says he is a wolf—  
Jesus stretches forth his hand,  
and, look: Satan is a mouse!

Holy One!

My enemies say they will kill me,  
but Jesus is the Chief of Police,  
and my enemies have fled,  
leaving me in peace.  
Sergeant-Major of the soldiers,  
when he appears on the scene  
my enemies have turned away trembling.

Jesus is not a laggard,  
When we call him from a distance,  
he answers from close by.  
We call him from afar,  
and he draws near to answer.

The Torrent which cannot be stopped!  
The River which no one need tell the path to the sea!  
The Rock in the sea,  
which doesn't fear waves!

He is **Bonsu**, the whale.  
We don't frighten him with rumbling trucks.  
We are weighed down with booty  
when warring in his name.  
For he comes when we call,  
to perform impossible deeds.

Jesus blockades the road of death  
with wisdom and power.  
He, the sharpest of all great swords,  
has made the forest safe for the hunters.  
The *mmoatia* he has cut to pieces;  
he has caught *sasabonsam*  
and twisted off its head!

He is the Hunter gone to the deep forest.  
*Sasabonsam*, the evil spirit,  
has troubled hunters for many years.  
They ran in fear,  
leaving their guns behind.  
Jesus has found these same guns,  
and brought them to the hunters  
to go and kill the elephant.  
Truly, Jesus is a Man among men,  
the most stalwart of men!  
He stands firm as a rock.

Come and listen to  
a wonderful story about him.  
Rifle bullets are there,  
but he kills the elephant with kapok;  
when he turns around,  
he has stepped on *Ekoo* the buffalo,  
and killed him.

If we would speak of his wonderful deeds,  
we could go on until daybreak.  
He has taken the thread of a spider  
to tie to the horns of a bull,  
and dragged it home for three miles.

When you ask something from Jesus,  
he doesn't place it in your hands,  
but when you return to your room, it is there—  
if he had given it to you, you couldn't have carried it!

You and I have received Jesus:  
what a marvellous treasure for us;  
and what about our asofo?  
He's melted them into gold.  
Jesus shines brightly before them,  
and has made them the brightest of lamps,  
shining, as he leads them with stars.  
Come, all of you people, to Jesus,  
and you, too, will shine.  
He is the one who is the Morning Light.

Mere chiefs and kings are not his equals,  
though filled with glory and power,  
wealth and blessings, and royalty  
in the greatest abundance.  
But of them all, he is the leader,  
and the chiefs with all their glory follow after him.

He is Counsellor for young men and priests.  
He is the one for whom  
women lay down their cloths on the path,  
and pour sweet-smelling oil on his feet.  
They run to and fro amid shouts of praise before him.  
It is true: Jesus is a Chief!

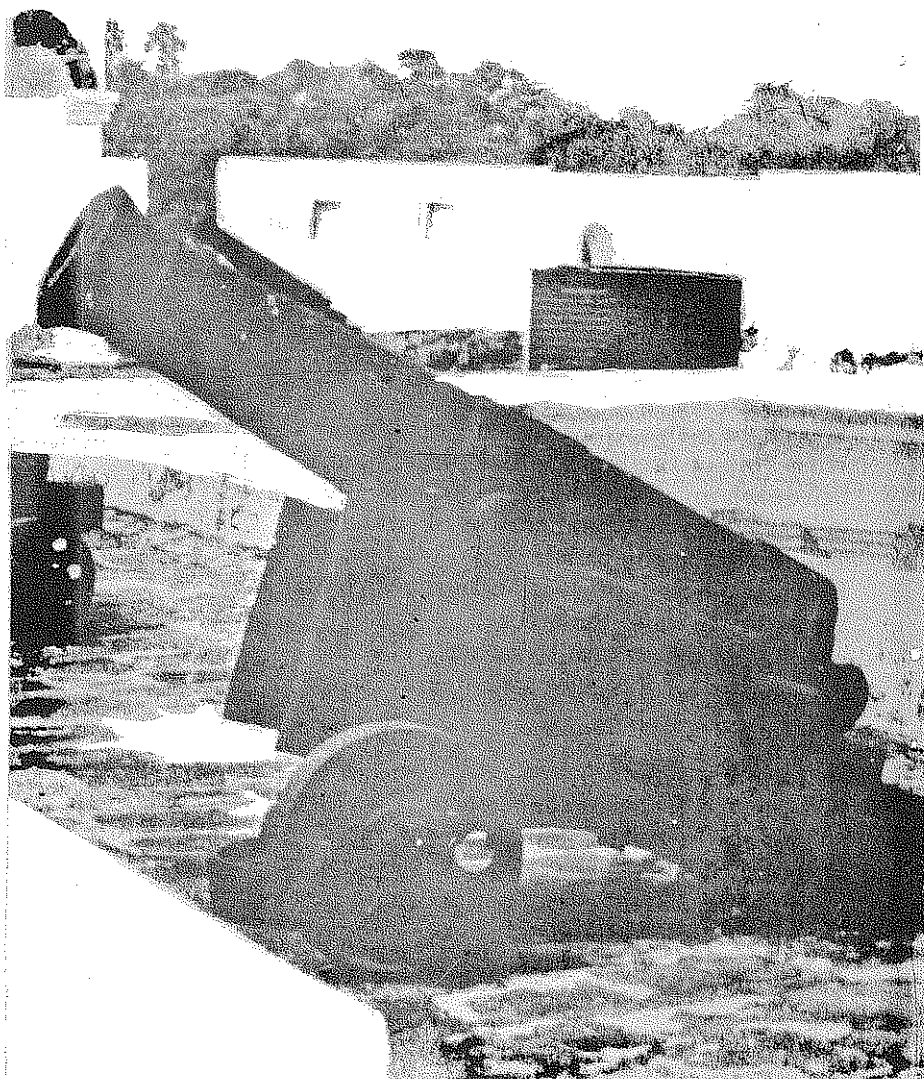
Sovereign among great chiefs!  
Of all the most generous persons he is the greatest,  
the most beautiful of thousands;  
the commander of seventy warriors.

Jesus!  
He is the Man of the sea,  
bravest of hunters on the ocean,  
leader of a thousand priests,  
the most handsome of the young men,  
among miracle-workers, a prophet,  
wisest of sorcerers.  
Among soldiers and police, the commanding officer.  
Teacher of teachers.

Holy One!

What light is this which rises here this morning?  
What kind of fire is this which blazes here,  
before whom all the chiefs, so majestically arrayed  
in beauty, grandeur and crowns of gold,  
should pompously parade?  
It is Jesus' Kingdom! It is Jesus, the Rich Man,  
throwing jewels to the breeze,  
which young men rush to gather,  
dancing and making him welcome.

As for the women,  
they are the drums of the festival  
enlivening the celebration.  
They dance and play,  
encouraging all with shouts of praise  
before the face of Jesus.



Big Ram of the sheepfold!  
Equipped with courage and strength,  
let them go to the world  
to bring the gospel to men.  
Young men give him welcome,  
and lead him in procession.

For he is greater than the greatest chiefs,  
but not in silver or gold;  
with wisdom and grace he builds his throne,  
and with knowledge he moulds a kingdom.

If Jesus should call you, smile,  
he gives gifts freely.  
We must make a head-pad to carry away his gifts.

Amansanhene: Jesus the Arbitrator,  
he who brings nations together.  
Milk and honey flow in his veins.

Children rush to meet him;  
crowds of young people  
rush about to make him welcome.

Chief of young women:  
they have strung a necklace of gold nuggets and beads,  
and hung it around your neck.  
So we go before you,  
shouting our praises, "Ose, Ose! "

Chief of young men:  
they are covered with precious beads  
and gold pendants worn by princes.  
They follow you, playing musical instruments.

Chief of all strong men: Owesekramofohene,  
you have placed your royal sword  
in our right hand,  
and the flag of victory in our left hand,  
while we lead you firing cannons.





Chief of all chiefs,  
he says the chiefs are the  
wise men of the land.  
So let us bring our troubles there,  
and let his judgement stand.  
The one who lays his worries there  
and says, "Lord, judge for me!"  
is the only one that God can help;  
God's wisdom sets him free.

Salvation has taken our souls captive  
and carried us off to a new land.  
Along the way we met with asofo;  
grace and blessing alone have we received.

We have come to this earth  
only to work and wear ourselves out.  
But in Jesus we find our rest.

The helpless infant, the wise child, the asofo:  
you are the one whom Jesus has blessed, saying,  
"The enemy's army is yours. Take it!"

When night has caught you on a journey,  
do not be afraid.  
If you meet with evil men, do not fear.  
Jesus is a cutlass going before you;  
he guards the rear with a mighty curved sword.

He takes us to the city of the great chief,  
where large beads and precious stones  
roll about in the streets.

Oyamyeni, the generous and merciful Jesus,  
who gives a thousand gifts, has come;  
he brings with him presents for his people.



This morning you will find  
what you have been searching for.

Holy One!

He is the great Grass Hut, the Shed which shelters mice,  
the "Thump! Thump!" of the pestle,  
he beats down our hunger.  
Hard-wood hoe-handle, which brings us our food.  
**Onyankopon Amponyinam:** God the provider,  
who has medicine for hunger.  
**Oserekyi Sakyi:** the Elephant Hunter,  
whose family's cooking pots  
have no place for little mushrooms.

Ato-ko-a-fre, when we go to war we call you.  
**Okwan-si-a-fa-mu,**  
the One who gets through when the road is blocked.  
Bravest of Muscle-Men!  
Great Lion of the grasslands!  
**Ahunuabobirim:** when you see him your heart thumps.  
Lion of the tribes of Israel!  
**Kurotwiamansa:** the Leopard,  
whose cubs cannot be caught!  
**Etwi:** the cat with the royal mane!  
**Okokuroko:** the Powerful One,  
among women and men, the most beautiful of all!

Flag of young men which has led us to victory!  
**Okyeame Nokwafo:** the truthful Linguist  
who judges things rightly!  
He has a share in all of God's creation.

Pencil of teachers  
which brings knowledge to the children!  
Spokesman of lawyers!

Helper of police!  
Victorious Chief of soldiers!  
Food of prisoners!

Commander of all the world's armies!  
Chief driver!  
Doctor of the sick!  
Helper of traders and craftsmen!  
Chief of farmers;  
who give us our produce!  
When we are thirsty and there are no streams,  
he gives us fruit to quench our thirst.  
There are oranges and mangoes,  
pineapple, and sugar cane, too.

You are the fruitful beans  
which burst and spring from the pod.  
You let the barren bear twins!  
Lion of the grasslands!  
We call to you, "Come!"

Jesus!  
In hard times you are the one we call on.  
Our priests have encamped: come!  
Our young men stand ready for battle: come quickly!  
We say, "Come and save us!"  
Kantankaribofo: you who carry  
the double-edged sword into battle,  
the enemy fears you.

The shining brightness of our asofo is our mirror.  
Through you, we tell prophecies to the nations.  
Who are they that stand on the rock before Jesus?  
They are asofo coming to save us, and bring us to Jesus.

They help us to drink from the fountain  
which flows from the throne of God.  
"Whoever drinks from this fountain  
will never thirst!" says Jesus.

Jesus, the Seer among prophets  
who always speaks the truth.  
Wise of soothsayers, the resurrected body,  
who raised himself from three days in the grave.  
Storehouse of wisdom!  
Jesus is the one who shouted at Death,  
and Death ran from his face.

My masters, the asofos,  
I and my friends are searching for you.  
We say, "You are the ones  
to speak the truths of God."  
If you speak and teach us, we will listen.

This word will bring us close to Jesus,  
the one who has everlasting life and peace,  
for Death knows not the way to his town.  
The asofos show the way,  
while groups of young men rush to and fro.  
The Priest holds the Bible  
which is stronger than a cutlass.  
Man of God, who have been anointed with oil,  
you have become the crocodile  
whose mouth smells of fish.  
So go and rescue the world,  
for we are losing our way.

Ososo, wisdom fills you to the brim:  
God has made of you a guardian.  
He says you should watch over us,  
and not let us fall into the pit of death.

A naked person says, "I'll give you a cloth!"  
So I follow him.  
Then I meet a priest who says,  
"That man is naked—what can he give you?  
Turn back and go to Jesus,  
and this very day you will be wearing *kente*."

Our ancestors didn't know of Onyankopon: the great God.  
They served lesser gods and spirits, and became tired.  
But as for us, we have seen holy men, and prophets.  
We have gone to tell the angels  
how Jehovah helped us reach this place.  
Jehovah has helped us come this far;  
with great gratitude we come before Jesus,  
the one who gives everlasting life.

If I buy your goods on credit, have no fear;  
if I don't pay you, you shouldn't complain:  
for I'm going to ask a very generous Man,  
and get the money to pay you.

Jesus is the day of month when I get my pay.  
The Chief of Christians  
whose shade-tree grows money,  
whose knife cuts great chunks of meat:  
The big House which takes in travellers.

The unused farm where grows the wild yam.  
The Sea, which gives us fat fish.

The first-born Child who knows Death's antidote.  
Jesus is the wall which bars Death from entry,  
and makes many hearts leap for joy.

Horns and instruments sound all night till sunrise.  
And what is the reason?  
Jesus has come!  
Priests go before him playing stringed instruments,  
and young men shout praises behind.  
All of the chiefs have set up their chairs  
and wait for him.  
That's why his heavenly guitars are playing;  
the earth trembles and the thunder roars.

The sun's halo and the rainbow  
are the signs of his coming,  
while all of the chiefs  
beat the gong-gongs, the *nnawuta* and *adawuru*,  
mightily and gloriously.  
We say, "All quiet!" for Jesus will speak.  
The Chiefs encourage him with drumming.  
Women come from the grave-side and shout happily,  
"Jesus is victorious!"

Jesus,  
whose soldiers are the thunder and lightning,  
whose police, the wind!  
When Jesus' slave, the wind, goes away,  
he doesn't stay away long;



he comes back so fast  
that he topples great trees.  
When he passes by here, they lie on the ground.

Jesus!  
You say it once and the matter is settled;  
in all the world, you have the final say.

Sekyirene: the best of yams  
with foliage profuse: you do kingly deeds.  
With your leaves alone, you fill children.  
Tree of the grassland: **kranke**,  
You who give us the shea-nut oil!  
Moon of the harvest month,  
who give us new yams!

You are Holy!

Bravest attacker of all warriors  
Jesus is our shining light: he is with us!

Jesus is the one  
who fills his basket with sickness,  
and dumps it into the depths of the sea.  
He has been here already and taken sickness away.  
He stands on the sea with outstretched arms,  
while the devil walks the forest in agony.  
Hunter of *εκοο*, the buffalo,  
and Helper of the nations,  
he stays in one place  
while he does his miracle-making.

The brightest of Lanterns  
who helps us hunt at night.  
When we are going to sleep,  
We sleep soundly because Jesus is here with us.

The great Elephant of the forest,  
who knows its secrets,  
and walks its arbors, without hindrance.

Jesus: he walks around in our hearts,  
and knows all that is in them.  
He has forgiven our sins  
that we might come to him.

Jesus! You are Okyerema Nyanno:  
the God of all drummers  
who are seen in the moon beating your drum  
as your young maidens dance around you.  
Soldiers, police and crowds of young men  
leap in jubilation.  
Priests and pastors in procession,  
thousands of them,  
lift state swords high in salute.  
You have adorned your young maidens  
with golden finery,  
and strewn precious beads before them.

Let us beat the gong-gong,  
and announce it to the nations;  
Let us bring our Beauty and show him to them.

Jesus prepares food in the streams,  
and if you are hungry, go to him and eat.  
If darkness has caught you unprepared,  
a full moon rises, and follows you home.

Jesus, you are the Hunter!  
If you go to the hunt, let us go together,  
and we will serve you.  
Without you we can't get the elephant's head  
out of the trap.

We shall go with Jesus and see marvellous things.  
He takes three leaves of *Odwen*,  
the smallest tree of the forest  
to wrap up the elephant's head.  
He has sewn them with a needle and carried it home.

This isn't the only wonderful thing we have seen.  
When we were in the desert  
with the scorching sun overhead,  
he went to the deep forest  
to uproot *Odupon*, the giant tree,  
to shield us from the sun.  
A hole was not dug for transplanting this tree;  
yet it did not break, it did not fall,  
and didn't lose one leaf.  
It stands there now as I speak.

Jesus' wonders are many!  
It is on the sea that he raises his flock of sheep.  
The sheep which go around the town  
eating and destroying people's things -  
Jesus' sheep are not among them,  
as for him, all of his sheep are on the sea.

*Pataku*, the wolf, says he will catch some,  
but rather a whale catches him,  
when he reaches the place.  
Thieves say they will go and steal some,  
and are drowned before they reach the place.  
The wolf is strong, but the whale has caught him;  
why is it that the whale and sheep can live in peace  
and the whale doesn't bite them?  
Yet he catches the wolf when he comes near.  
Storms on the sea are calmed when he speaks.

Jesus!

His land is bordered by no other farms.

His farm is on the river.

It is there he plants his corn.

He weeds his farm in the morning, and plants it.

By evening, he has gathered a harvest of corn.

He has filled seven hundred bags

for his flock to eat.

These sheep are strong, woolly, and most beautiful.

We lie about in the sea,

happily playing games.

Jesus walks away on air, his back to us;

when he turns around and comes back,

he is holding an elephant.

It is not for his miracles

or wonderful works alone

that we are following Jesus.

For in him is grace and blessing,

in him is eternal life, and in him, peace.

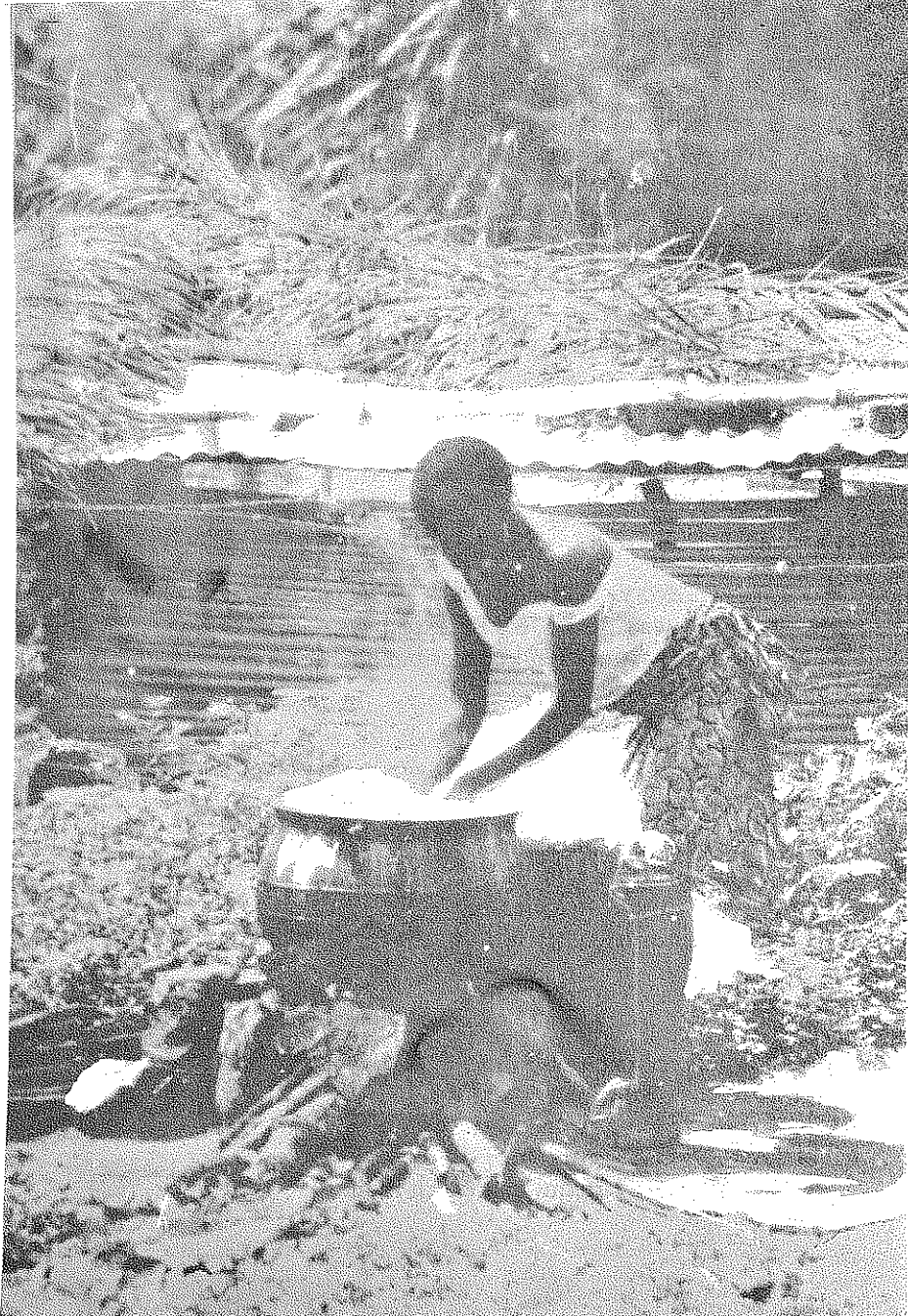
Jesus! We have taken you out

and nailed you to a cross.

On a cross we have nailed you.

The cross is your fishing net;

you cast it in the stream, and catch men.



The cross is the bridge we cross over  
to search for the well of his blood.  
The blood-pool is there.  
If it were not for the cross  
we would never have the chance to wash in that blood;  
the cross is the Christians' precious inheritance;  
it brings us to eternal life.

We have been walking and walking,  
so now we are sitting and resting,  
for we are very tired.  
But the asofo say, "No!"  
Our priests say, "Don't sit there".  
If we do this Hunger will kill us,

Let's go to Jesus' City,  
called *Soe-di-bi*  
(Put down your load and have something to eat).  
He is the great city  
whose children are always well fed.  
When he goes he brings enough to satisfy us.

You are the deep forest which gives us tasty foods.  
The forest of cane and thorns,  
where wander *kente* weavers,  
in search of shuttle and loom.

Jesus!  
You are the Caterpillar who plough up the land  
for the Northerners to plant their guinea-corn.

He is the one  
who cooks his food in huge palm-oil pots.  
Thousands of people have eaten,  
yet the remnants fill twelve baskets.  
If we leave all this, and go wandering off—  
if we leave his great gift, where else shall we go?

We will wander around until hunger kills us,  
and our clothes are old and worn.  
We are going to eat with pigs,  
we are going to be disgraced!

Jesus! You are the Mother  
whom we will return to,  
and say, "Please take us!"  
You are the one  
who raises your hand holding a cutlass,  
the cutlass you give to your workers,  
to cut down the forest.

Jesus! You are the Chief of farmers.  
One of your labourers weeps;  
he says he has stepped on a thorn;  
Another says he's cut his hands;  
another says brambles have scratched him,  
and all the rest are caught in a thicket of thorns.

If you don't give us a bulldozer  
we won't be able to weed,  
for this is a troublesome forest.

You are Nsoboadua, the huge Cross-Beam,  
For you look down on us,  
At the front of the house, and the back of the house.

Jesus!

Let your Holy Spirit come and help us,  
to lead us to victory.

The famine has become severe;  
let us go and tell Jesus!  
He is the one who,  
when he raises his hands,  
gives even our enemies their share,  
and our brothers bring head-pads  
to carry the food away.

Then let us go and tell him,  
Ankankyerε-Damfo-Adu, the friend of all;  
though we have said nothing yet,  
he knows all about our needs.

He is the fertile forest-land  
on which farmers labour, cutlasses in hand.  
He is Okwatayi-mu-agyabenaa  
who brings the cleared land to fruition.  
Farmers are clearing the land  
to reap its harvest,  
the fruitful land  
where the wild yam grows.  
Children sit about the fire  
awaiting his arrival;  
when he comes, he gives generously,  
and guides us in the right way.  
He carries the sweet yam, *pona*;  
and our hearts are at peace.



Let us stay and wait for the priest,  
for there is a great war before us.  
"Our priests, we have come, we have seen!"  
We are on the way to tell Jesus.  
But we cannot fight alone,  
the battle is too fierce;  
our enemies are stronger than we are.  
Jesus, come!  
for you are stronger than our enemies.  
The leader of the asofa replies,  
"Be at peace, and have no fear;  
for Jesus will come and deliver you."

If the boat should overturn  
the Swimmer will come.  
If the machine is ruined  
the Mechanic will take care of it.  
Should we meet with any difficulty,  
it is you, Jesus, to whom we call.  
When there is a great crisis  
crowds will gather.  
When the times call for heroic action  
the nation's Saviour will come.  
When a grievous action is committed  
the great Commander will appear.  
When the gun is hot in battle  
a Man must carry it on his chest!

Let us sit down  
and wait for the Adontenhene.  
Jesus is far off  
but he hears all we say.

"What people are these who trouble you?"

Jesus asks the priests.

He himself gives the answer:

"They have all died!"

He tells the priests,

"Go, you have already won the battle."

We don't use bullets or guns in the battles of Jesus;

O Lord of hosts, say a word

and let the enemy fall down dead!

With sharp hoes and axes

farmers cut great roots;

with hammer and wedge

they split firewood.

But Jesus has used saw and cutlass

to split the enemy;

he shatters their power.

In the morning, gentle mist and forest dew

settle on the garden.

Jesus appears

at the outskirts of the city.

The weavers go before him

waving the cloth they have woven.

They testify to his high position:

if you want to meet him

you must wear *kente*.

Jesus, you sparkle like precious beads;

there is no one else like you,

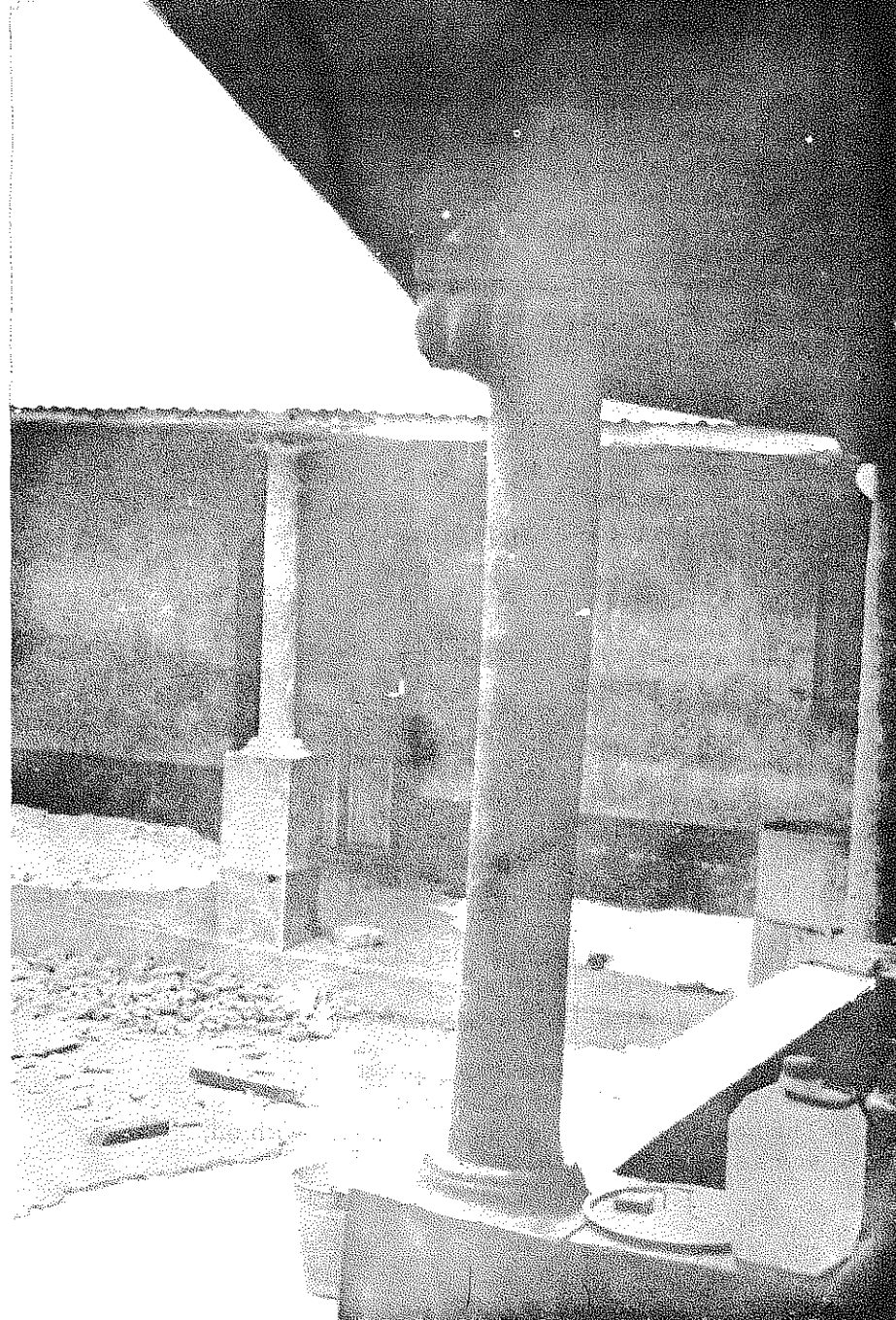
shining down upon the nations.

Let us listen to the words of the priest

for he is speaking about deliverance.

The Lord of hosts has anointed his mouth with oil,

and he speaks the truth.



Let us not leave him  
lest we meet with death,  
but let us sit in his presence  
and listen to the word of God:  
therein is life.

Man of God, speak, and we will listen!  
Jesus is the one who is speaking;  
he has the spring of life —  
waters greater than the sea,  
not to be found on earth.

Jesus has put it in the hands of the priests.  
It flows from his mouth,  
giving salvation for me and for you.

Jesus! He puts the crab trap  
on the roof of the forest hut,  
and lights a fire beneath it.  
The next day  
the trap is filled with crabs.  
He cools *kokonte* in the stream;  
the next morning, behold! it has dried,  
and been ground back into powder,  
and women gather it for cooking.

If you are in trouble with the government,  
you go and tell Jesus.  
When you reach the court  
they will say,  
“Go back home!”  
No one will question you;  
you won't have to say a word.  
I'm going to tell Jesus about it:  
today my Husband is a lawyer —  
how eloquent he is!

He goes from town to town  
proclaiming the word of God.  
When the young men come forward,  
the one Jesus shines on is my husband.

We have bought things in the market,  
and we are going to show them to Jesus  
so that he gives us money to pay for them.  
He comes holding seven hundred —  
not seven hundred cedis,  
but seven hundred pounds!  
What kind of rich man is this,  
that when you are with him  
he spends seven hundred pounds on you!

Osofo walks together with Jesus;  
that is why people love him.  
The word of God has washed osofo clean,  
rubbed him with oil,  
and covered him in costly clothing.  
Let us go and admire him:  
look at the golden necklace,  
how perfectly it suits him!  
Jesus hung it round his neck  
when he came to him.

My brother, you who are standing there,  
come to Jesus,  
and he will give you yours.  
Don't make yourself weary  
searching the world for one,  
for you won't get any;  
pure gold comes from the word of God!  
My brother Christian,  
boldly strike your chest,  
and boast in the Lord.:

Go and tell the unbelievers,  
"Come and look at my neck!  
See the gold necklace that hangs there,  
and how it suits me.  
I came to Jesus, and he gave it to me!"

When we met with Jesus  
he had tied together both sickness and death,  
and cast them into the sea.  
This is the reason the nations rejoice  
and the people are happy.

Jesus travelled in the evening,  
and darkness had fallen.  
He met murderers on the way,  
but when they saw him they ran.  
They rushed into the thorns  
and bees came to sting them.  
In that very place they died.

Who is stronger than the clenched fist,  
or the iron rod that cannot be bent  
into a pad for carrying loads?  
Jesus takes the blunt knife  
to cut down the forest.  
The sharp thorns that cannot be stepped on.  
The elephant-tusk horn that none can lift —  
he blows it!  
Opam-me wu: the tree of thorns  
which none can ever climb:  
who dares strike these spikes and points  
with his fist?

Who can stand on the tree that bears kapok  
or on its branches? Who can run on them?

Apopobibiri: the slippery moss on the rocks –  
the moment you set foot on them  
your head is split open.

The mountains of Jerusalem surround us;  
we are in the midst  
of the mountains of Zion.  
Satan, your bullets can't touch us.  
If Satan says he will rise up against us,  
we are still the people of Jesus!

If Satan troubles us,  
Jesus Christ,  
you who are the Lion of the grasslands,  
you whose claws are sharp,  
will tear out his entrails,  
and leave them on the ground  
for the flies to eat.

Let us all say, Amen!

# glossary

- adawuru — gong-gong or iron bell, beaten with a stick by an announcer to draw attention to his message. (31)
- Adontenhene — warlord, general. (13)
- Adubasapon — one who has big muscles and therefore can carry ample weapons. (7)
- adwinasa — a special pattern for kente (cloth woven on a narrow loom): "the pattern to beat all patterns". (10)
- Ahunuabobirim — when you see him your heart misses a beat. (27)
- Ankankyers-Damfo-Adu — the All-knowing. (39)
- Akyerekyerékwan — the one who shows the way. (7)
- Amansanhene — chief of arbitrators (picturing the chief gathering together his sub-chiefs, and settling disputes). (23)
- Amponyinam — the one who provides the essentials for life. (27)
- asofo — plural of osofo.
- Ato-ko-a-fre — the one we call on when we go to war. (27)
- batakari — long flowing robe worn in the north of Ghana. (6)
- birempon — a prominent person or chief. (17)
- bonsu — whale. (19)
- Damfo-Adu — traditional title for God: "great Clever One". (5)
- ekoo — buffalo or bush cow. (19)
- etwi — member of the cat family, especially lion or leopard. (27)
- Gyaasehene — official in charge of the chief's kitchen and household. (11)
- kakae — something frightening. (9)
- Kantankaribofo — kantankrankyi is the great two-edged battle sword; bofo is helper; so the meaning is sword-helper or sword-carrier in battle. (28)
- kente — costly hand-woven cloth of intricate pattern. (11)
- Kofi — name of a boy born on Friday: many objects of traditional importance also have day-names, thus the loom is called Kofi. (10)
- kokonte — cassava fufu; dried ground cassava, made into a thick porridge. (43)
- kono — large basket for carrying foodstuffs in bulk. (5)
- Korobetoe — Everlasting: literally, man may come and go, but He remains for ever. (12)
- kranku — shea-nut tree. (32)
- kurotwiamansa — leopard. (27)
- mmoatia — in traditional lore these are small man-like creatures who live in the forest and can be troublesome. (19)



Mmpowmme'ahene — chief over many villages. (11)

Nkrante-boaso — sword-carrier and helper in battle. (17)

nnawuta — double gong-gong (see adawuru). (31)

nsoboadua — main cross-beam of a building. (39)

ntafowayifo — one who performs magical or wonderful deeds. (14)

odupon — a huge tree, but metaphorically a very great person such as a chief. (34)

odwen — a small bush with very fine leaves, which grows in the forest. (34)

ogyampanturudu — the great wind that precedes the first rain after the dry season. (10)

Okokuroko — Almighty. (27)

Okokurokohene — most powerful chief. (11)

okuruakwaban — the one who has overcome the strong man. (7)

Onyankopon — God. (10,27)

ose — exclamation of joyful praise, shouted by those going before the chief in procession. (23)

Otiberkesedu — one with spiritual perception, usually a great and powerful chief. (9)

Odokotobonnuare — a farmer who can cultivate land that formerly grew only thorn-bushes. (10)

ohemmerefo — chief who has time for ordinary people. (11)

Okatakyl — hero. (5,10)

Okatakyl-mu-agyaabenaa — one who is not limited to a single place; the title derives from a tree that grows in the forest and also in the savannah. (39)

Okokodurufo — stouthearted one. (9)

Okwan-si-a-fa-mu — the one who can get through when the road is blocked. (27)

Okyeame Nokwafo — truthful interpreter: the okyeame or "linguist" combines the duties of spokesman and lawyer for the chief. (27)

Okyerema Nyanno — god of the drummers, who is said to be seen in the face of the moon as a drummer with his drums. (33)

Oserekyi Sakyi — the great hunter who kills elephants. (27)

osofo — priest, minister, or pastor. (30)

Otwentwenko — the one for whom we wait to receive good gifts. (11)

Owesekramo — one who is very strong. (9)

Owesekramofohene — the chief of all strong men. (23)

oyamyeni — one who is merciful. (25)

pataku — hyena or wolf. (34)

sasabonsam — mythical forest monster. (19)

Sekyere Buruku — the god associated with a rocky hill near Kwahu Tafo which dominates the surrounding area. (6)

sekyirene — a type of yam. (32)

soe-di-bi — take and eat some. (27)

Toturobonsu — the one who causes the rain to fall and the rivers to overflow. (10)

Tutugyagu — one who is hot-tempered or fearless. (7)



GOD CAN be encountered in the African here and now — in farm and forest, and amid the customs and structures of African traditional life. That is the message that rings out clearly in the prayers and praises of Afua Kuma. A farmer in the forests of Kwahu, Madam Afua Kuma had no formal education, but within the fellowship of the Church of Pentecost her observant mind has come to grips with the teaching of the Bible; as a result her faith is no alien religion but that of a black African in her own traditional setting.

In the prayers of Afua Kuma we are privileged to share a humble farmer's firm grasp of God, expressed in African thought-forms: she uses the familiar images of her environment to express those attributes of God — omnipotence, omnipresence, omniscience, perfection — which are often thought of only in the abstract.

Readers whose understanding of God has been clothed in purely metaphysical terms will be challenged by this book to recognize him in the context of their everyday experience.



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