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An African Prayer from the Heart of a Woman

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Nana Nyame (The Ancient One who satisfies all)
Onyankopon (The Great and Dependable Friend)
Tweduampon (The Mighty Tree that when we lean on, we do not fall)
Obaade (The Ancient One who created all things)
You are the big thumb without which we cannot tie any knot.
You give us life and all the things that make life worth living,
Nsa. (Drink)

Asaase Yaa (The Earth Deity, *Yaa*)
You feed and nourish us when we are alive.
And when we die, we are kept safely in your womb,
Nsa.

All the numerous Spirits around us,
You are in the trees, in rivers in the forest and in the rocks.
You ensure that we behave well to each other,
Nsa.

Nananom Nsamanfo (Our cherished Ancestors and Ancestresses)
You have gone before us.
Yet you are always with us.
You keep us in check and make sure
That we don't destroy all that you have left behind,
Nsa.

This morning, we have gathered here.
We are here not with any evil intention.
Some years ago, a forbidden event occurred.
Greed and ignorance made us enslave our people,
Our brothers, sons, uncles, and fathers were beaten and tortured.
Our sisters, daughters, aunties, mothers were raped and tortured.
Our people, your people were traumatized, disgraced, and dehumanized.
Some died and the ocean swallowed them.

But since you do not die so we shall never die.
The Ocean could not swallow them.
The salty sea could not destroy them.
Rather, it preserved them.
From the womb of the sea they are back.
From the Gate of No Return, they have returned.

They are here not with chains.
They are here as free human beings.
They are here with titles: Professors,
Clergy women, Singers, Mothers, Sisters.
Though with pain and hurt, they are here.

Come and give them *Akwaaba*.
Come and welcome them.
Come and cleanse us from greed, guilt and anger.
Remove the spirit of insensibility from us.
Give us the wisdom and humility to learn from each other.

We have met to eat from the same pot.
Together, we have met to tie knots.
We have met to journey together.
We have met to share our stories.

If there is any one in our midst who does not
Want us to have *nkwa* (life and prosperity),
Anyone who wishes for our pain and hurt,
Come and discipline them and turn their
Evil intentions to a good one.

Nkwa to all that are gathered here.
Nkwa to all our families.
Take us safely back to our various homes,
And bring us together again.

Nkwa, Life and prosperity to all the
People that have gathered here.
Nkwa, Life and prosperity.