

CultureTalk Ethiopia Video Transcripts: <http://langmedia.fivecolleges.edu>
First Day of the Year

English translation:

N: Nakfote M: Woman on the left

N: What does our year start with?

M: *Enkutatash*¹.

N: *Enkutatash*...*Enkutatash* is on *Meskerem 1*. I don't know. For me, *Enkutatash* sparks some very special emotions for me because after our summer vacation ends, it's the time when we return to school. For all sorts of things: for students, it's the time to return to school, for employees, it's time to return to work, and I really enjoy celebrating *Enkutatash*.

M: What always amazes me about non-Ethiopians is that their New Year falls in the middle of the year.

N: Me too...I mean, it has different meanings in different cultures, but, when I think of it, the beginning of the year should be the beginning of other things as well. The New Year is a new start.

M: To start everything fresh.

N: Yes. When it's in the middle, I don't know how they see it. Umm, another thing that amazes me is that – we're seven years behind, right?

M: Right.

N: So, we're in 1999 and next year, it'll be 2000.

M: It'll be the millennium. I think this is because we use the Julian calendar.

N: Yes, and I was discussing this with someone and I think it's our method of counting from the time of Jesus Christ's birth that is correct. So it's been 1999 years since he was born. I'm not sure how it occurred, but in their system, an error has been found somewhere that caused theirs to go seven years ahead.

M: So what do you do to celebrate *Enkutatash* in your house?

N: When I was a little kid, I'd receive new clothes for *Enkutatash*. New clothes, new shoes... Yeah, you wake up early in the morning and– my favorite thing about holidays is

¹ First day of the Ethiopian Calendar new year

the food. I love eating *doro wot*² the most. That's it, eat, eat, eat. Morning till night, I eat. There's this sense of newness. For example, if *Enkutatash* were on Saturday, then on Friday night, you'd be at church, delivering your prayers for a peaceful beginning to the New Year, and that you'd succeed in all that you do. I don't know, that's what I feel when I think about it.

M: For a lot of people, it represents a new beginning. If the previous year didn't go well, then we promise ourselves for a better one this year. It's a time when you resolve to do a lot of things. For a lot of people, not for me personally, but for many, the New Year is very special.

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² traditional chicken dish