

## Olelashe

Kenya is a hotspot of cultural diversity. There are more than 42 ethnic groups, all with a unique identity and set of traditions. Even though there are instances of inter-ethnic conflicts, diversity is part of our national heritage. Among the many tribes in Kenya, the Maasai people have gained international prominence for cultural preservation. The Maasai are primarily known for their distinctive dressing, love for livestock, and their beadwork. They are also locally acclaimed for their ability to make herbal medicine. There is a saying that a leap year comes faster than Maasai steps into a hospital. This story was born out of associated identity.

The anthrax disaster put our village on the national radar. In the aftermath, different strangers appeared in our community. On a given Sunday afternoon, I was busy washing my bicycle in our home compound. I was too engrossed in my task that I didn't notice a stranger walk in until he spoke.

"Ero! Why are you washing this thing? This thing cannot fly. Is this thing an airplane?" The stranger asked.

I looked at the gentleman and examined him head to toe. The man had long hair braided in a complex fashion (shanga), including beaded jewelry and black robe (s) a checked red and black robe (s) giant sandals (Akala) made of tire soles and strips. It was an amusing attire. I was still admiring when he spoke again.

"*Olelashe*, my name is Ole Pakuo. I have come to sell medicine to you, but now that I see this thing, I have a business proposal," he addressed me, pointing at my bike.

At that point, I noticed that he was carrying two five-liter plastic jerry cans. I was more interested in the business opportunity than the medicine he was hawking. I listened as he explained that the brown liquid was herbal medicine, a concoction of medicinal herbs. According to his claim, it could heal any disease by removing toxins from the body system. Significantly, he added that medicine would protect consumers from anthrax. The unique selling point was the affordable price. The selling price for half-a-cup of the drug was one hundred shillings. I did quick math and realized he had with him medicine worth eighty thousand shillings.