This article discusses transfers between China and Tanzania from the late 1950s until today. Following the establishment of ties between anti-colonial activists from East Africa and Chinese leaders in the late 1950s, relations between independent Tanzania and China took off in the mid-1960s. Building their own version of “African Socialism” (ujamaa), Tanzanians invited Chinese support and selectively adopted and reworked Maoist models such as the Cultural Revolution. Tanzania became an arena of competing socialisms, as Chinese competition with the GDR in Zanzibar shows, and home to the largest Chinese project in Africa, the Tanzania-Zambia Railway. Facing an economic and financial crisis in the 1980s, Tanzanian reformers in favour of neoliberal solutions discovered China as a possible model of rescuing the economy without having to change the political system. As ujamaa fully disintegrated in years leading up to the early 1990s, Sino-Tanzanian relations came to focus on joint ventures rather than aid. At present, Chinese investments have reached new heights and are accompanied by ideological transfers between the ruling parties, but also nationalist concerns over the effects of Chinese initiatives.