



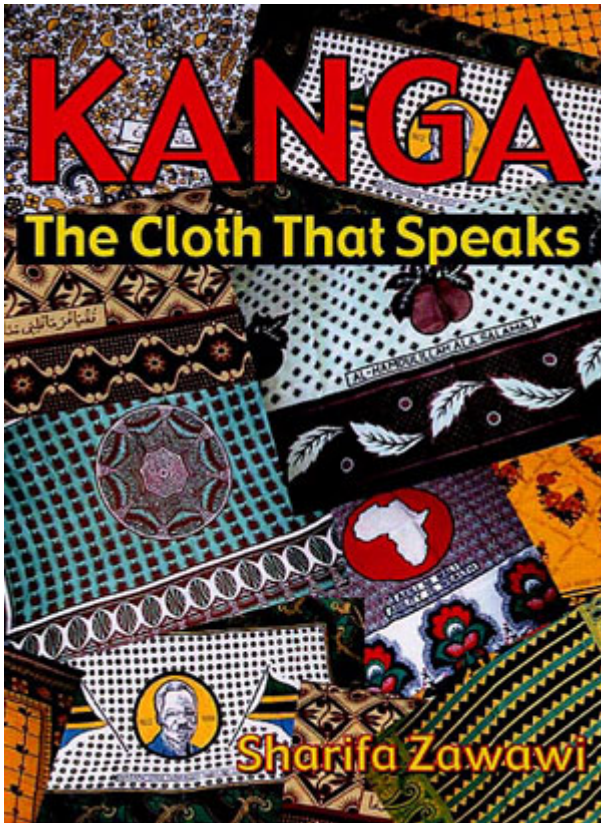
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From the Book Cover



Photograph of book cover

Kanga The Cloth That Speaks

"The garment known today as *kanga* or *leso* provides a practical, attractive, comfortable form of dress for a tropical climate. It is also an ancient form of communication: it carries a message. The sayings that appear on *kangas* reflect Swahili cultural and human values, material and verbal art; they maintain Swahili literary traditions and enrich them; they present a composite of the historic mercantile connection of items of clothing within the wide context of the Indian Ocean."

"Sharifa Zawawi's search for a better understanding of *kangas* led her to examine the history of the *kanga*, its design, message and significance for Swahili speaking communities within the modern nations of East Africa and the Gulf states of the Arabian Sea. She illustrates and discusses *kangas* and messages from Dar es Salaam, Mombasa, Zanzibar and Muscat."

"Dr. Zawawi takes into account the complexity of *kanga* history and begins to trace anew the development of kanga from cloth to clothing. Kanga inscriptions provide a documentary

representation of Swahili social and political forms of discourse. They express the traditional socio-cultural values of the Swahili community while also reflecting the advent of modernity and change. They are an important source for understanding Swahili ideal behavior and the Swahili value system; their content relates to both women and men, young and old. They instruct at the same time that they provide an outlet for emotions and expectations. They are a window to changing values and cultural and political attitudes. The messages printed on the cloth are permanent -- yet of their time. Culture, history, fashion and language are inextricably interwoven in this study of East African dress."

Language:

Swahili

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