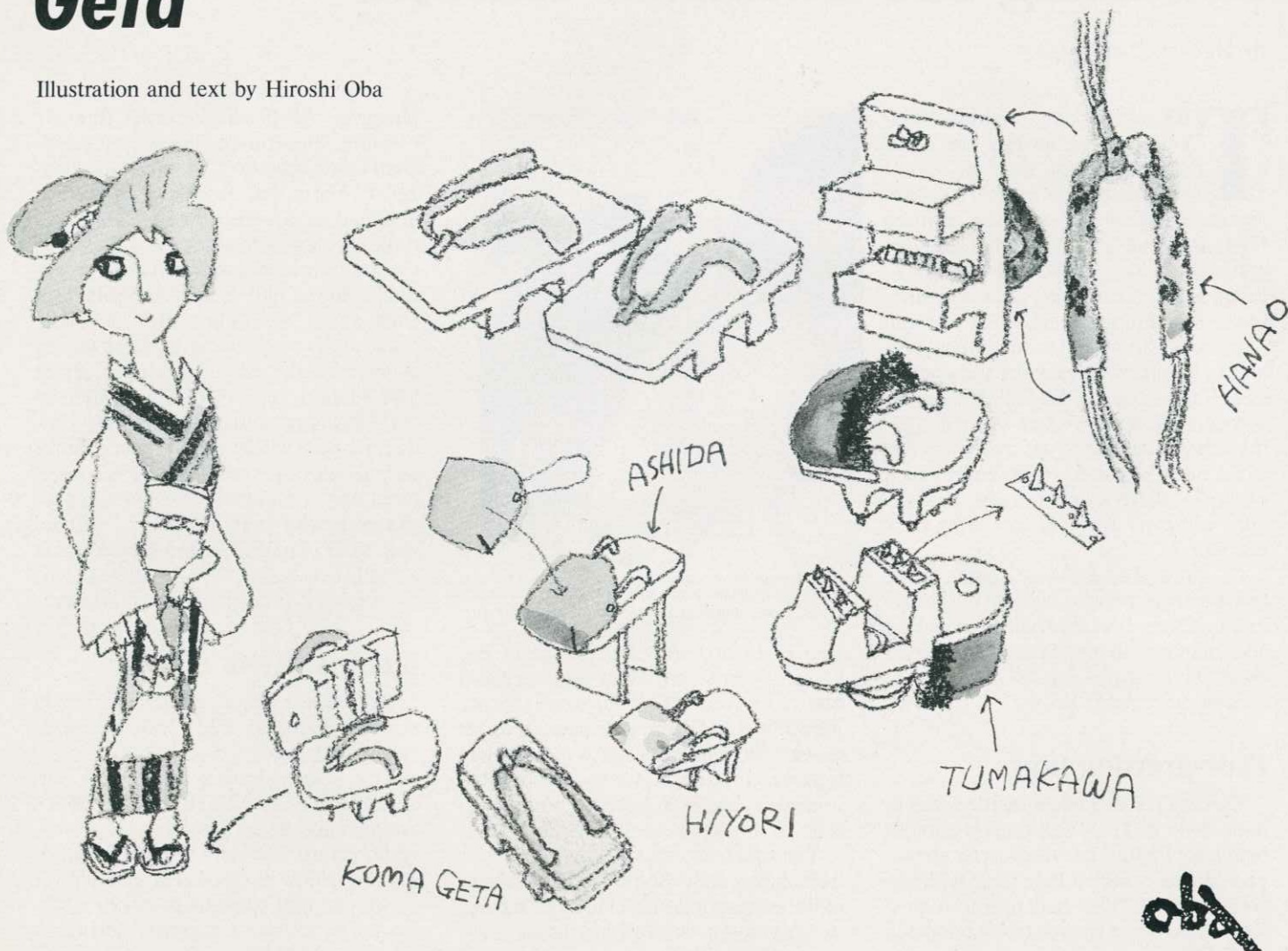


Geta

Illustration and text by Hiroshi Oba



For centuries *geta* have been the ideal footwear for kimono, and even now light wooden clogs are the fashionable choice for women wearing traditional Japanese dress.

Men out for a summer evening stroll also relish the refreshingly cool feel of *geta* on their feet. Although the idea of wooden footwear may not be that unusual, *geta* have a very distinctive design. Made from well-cured paulownia or willow by skilled craftsmen, *geta* come in many different styles. In addition to the *koma-geta*, *ashida* and *hiyori-geta*, there are even some made especially for walking in the snow, called *yuki-geta*, in the snow-country regions.

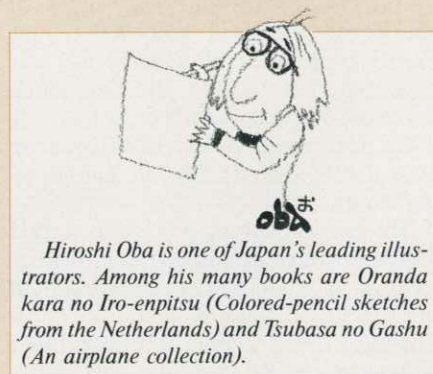
Once the platform of the *geta* is made, a simple thong is attached to make the *geta*

ready to wear. Here too, there is great variety for both men and women, including cloth, leather, and even snakeskin in beautiful straps designed to complement the carefully crafted wooden platform.

In addition to being just right for each occasion and each kimono, in the days when *geta* were the main form of footwear, they also had to be right for the weather. On rainy days, you wore the *ashida*, on clear days the *koma-geta*, and on spring days in the country the *hiyori-geta*. Because of the many specialized *geta* available, most families kept several different kinds in the *geta-bako*, or shoe cupboard, just inside the entrance to the house.

For people worried about athlete's foot, the excellent ventilation provided by

wearing *geta* without socks makes them the ideal healthy footwear. So when it's time for your summer vacation, why not give *geta* a try.



Hiroshi Oba is one of Japan's leading illustrators. Among his many books are *Oranda kara no Iro-enpitsu* (Colored-pencil sketches from the Netherlands) and *Tsubasa no Gashu* (An airplane collection).