

1



2





いす
[isu]
chair
チェア

いぬ
[inu]
dog
ド(ー)ッグ



いた
[ita]
board
ボード

[i]

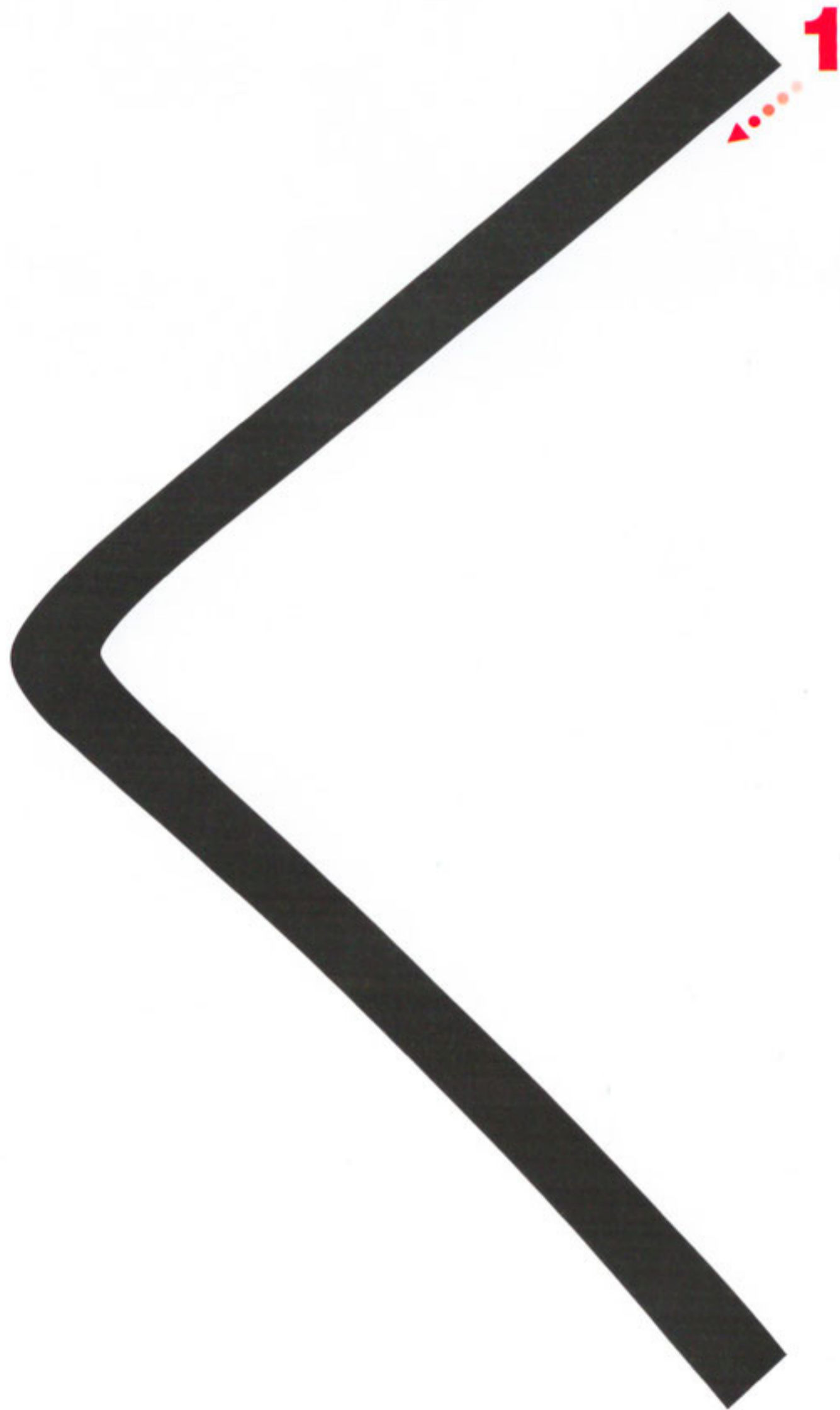
as in field, tree, sea eel, wheel



いも
[imo]
potato
ポテイトウ



いえ
[ie]
house
ハウス



くび
[kubi]
neck
ネック



くち
[kuchi]
mouth
マウス

[ku]
as in cougar, cool, kookaburra

くぎ
[kugi]
nail
ネイル



くり
[kuri]
chestnut
チェスナット



くま
[kuma]
bear
ベア



くろ
[kuro]
black
ブラック

くつ
[kutsu]
shoes
シューズ

The people who invented hiragana long ago must have been a leisurely and spiritually rich people. Whenever I see hiragana, or whenever I read or write it, this is what I think. Hiragana characters are gentle and unrestrained, and each has its own whims. And because there aren't any strict standards to which they must conform, each has a personality all its own.

However, this absence of "strict standards" often causes trouble for learners of Japanese. It's difficult to follow a character's "whims." It's about as difficult as trying to precisely imitate someone else's humming.

I believe the best way to learn hiragana is to get to know the personalities and whims of the individual characters—to appreciate the rich variety of shapes and sizes they come in. I devised this book to help readers do just this. I hope my readers have as much fun with it as I have had in the process of creating it.

Gomi Taro