The twenty-five letters appearing here are selected from approximately 280 letters that were published in Frank Gibney, ed., *Sensō: The Japanese Remember the Pacific War: Letters to the Editor of Asahi Shim bun*, trans. Beth Cary (Armonk, N.Y.: M. E. Sharpe, 1995). The Gibney letters were selected from some 1,100 Japanese letters published in the *Asahi Shim bun*, which in turn were selected from 4,000 received in 1986–87. Unlike the excerpts from the Yamanouchi translations of Japanese soldiers’ letters and the letters by and to Donald Keene in this special issue, the letters in this collection are produced complete, as they appeared in the translation by Beth Carey and edited by Frank Gibney. We can assume the originals were edited before appearing in the *Asahi Shim bun*, which may explain their brevity. The page numbers for their appearance in the Gibney volume are given in parentheses after the title.

My Antiwar Struggle (*Sensō*, 10–11)

In response to the request to know more about the situation before the War, I will tell the story of my struggle against the War. In mid-1931, I led the strike at the Asakusa Movie Theater and was detained for several weeks at the Kikuyabashi police station. On September 18 the Manchurian Incident occurred. On the twenty-seventh, before a large crowd of spectators, over three hundred movie theater workers dropped from the theater roof tens of thousands of handbills that read “Oppose worker firings and pay cuts, oppose the invasion of Manchuria—liberate Korea and Taiwan.” We dared to wave red flags and hold an illegal demonstration, skirmishing with police troops. Nearly thirty of us were arrested.

On 1 September 1932, over two hundred workers and students assembled at the Ōmura Masujirō statue in Yasukuni Shrine and held a quick-step demonstration to the bottom of the Kudan hill, shouting slogans opposing the invasion of China. In addition, we planned an anti-war general strike by more than twenty thousand workers at large factories in Nagoya, such as Mitsubishi Aircraft, for 2 September. The strike was to protest the manufacture of arms for the invasion of China and to demand wage increases. However, over a hundred people were arrested by the Aichi Prefecture Special Higher Police. I barely escaped.
During my five years of opposition struggles, I became weak from insufficient food and repeated torture. After recuperating, I decided to bide my time and wait for the future. I focused all my energies on becoming an electrical welder. Even when I was arrested, I had kept my membership in an illegal political party a secret, and because I had not written a conversion declaration, I was kept under observation by the military police [kempeitai] and the Special Higher Police until the day of Japan’s surrender. From the third day after our marriage, my wife was strongly advised by the Special Higher Police to divorce me and return to her family.

On 13 August 1945, Captain Fukushima of the Shibuya military police came to my house to interrogate me. For the first time in several years, I became angry. “We’re very close to unconditional surrender,” I said. He pulled out his revolver. When I said, “The military police and the secret police in Nazi Germany have been arrested. Shoot me if you want,” he put his revolver away and left.

I regret that I wasn’t able to prevent the War. We must strengthen the peace movement so that Japan won’t get caught up in a nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union.

Iwata Eiichi, eighty (m), former Tokyo assemblyman, Tokyo

**Militarism Fanned by Mass Media (Senso, 22)**

Shortly after the outbreak of the Manchurian Incident, one newspaper company began a find-raising campaign for donation of a warplane to the army. An admirable story about a primary school student saving his allowance to contribute to this cause fanned the donation fever of the people. The donated airplane was named the *Patriot*. A model of the *Patriot* was included as a supplement in an issue of *Boys’ Club*. I was one of the boys who put together this model and absorbed military knowledge by reading the description.

When the war with China started, one newspaper company held a competition for military songs. The lyrics of the songs that won this competition—“Grasp the Punishing Rifle and Sword” from “Song of the Advancing Troops,” and “How can I die without Performing a Heroic Deed?” and “Encouraged to Return Home Dead” from “Encampment Song”—strongly influenced the actions of the Japanese military. These were in stark contrast to the Meiji Era military songs, such as “War Buddy” and “March in the Snow,” which were about the sadness of war and the trials of the battlefield. Later, “The Rising Sun March” and “Song to Send off Soldiers to the Front” also came out of competitions held by newspapers.