The book begins with a discussion of "The Curriculum and Life in Classrooms." The authors note that the emphasis of the middle school curriculum under the Ministry of Education has been "the development of the whole person or balanced individuals" (p. 11) rather than learning of academic subjects, which is to be realized through a well-structured curriculum combining academic and non-academic activities. The conflict between the ideal of education and what actually happens in school are further discussed in chapter 3 (The Ideal of Education: A "Family Community"). The authors then analyze the role of the student's peers and friends in chapter 4 and of the student's teachers in chapter 5. As students willingly come to school because they want to be with their friends and participate in their club activities, the development of strong friendships and a sense of belonging to both the classroom and school is cultivated by skillful teachers. The dual role of teachers, especially home-room teachers (tannin), is "to assume a leadership role within the class as a group" (p. 72) and to "create elaborate systems of management in order to integrate young adolescents and teach them how to work in complex social institutions" (pp. In conclusion, the authors analyze how the dynamics of middle school years are connected "with changes in Japanese society and overall social capacity for change" (p. 6). They conclude that "the ability to instill resiliency in young adolescents will play a major role in the future of Japanese society" (p. 6) if Japan is to overcome reported problems with the education system and social change. In chapter 2 "Exams, Juku, and the Pressure to Advance in School," the author discuss the tensions inherent in Japan's competitive exam system. As high school education has become the norm rather than a dream in this modern era, Japanese middle school students face increasing pressure to do well academically. Despite the official goal mentioned above, the reality is that middle school education pulls students away from the learning ideal (namely, learning to become a "whole person"), and pushes them towards cramming information for the high school entrance exam. Based on these two chapters, the authors conclude that "most of the social development for young Japanese occurs in a school-based context" (p. 6). Given the importance of school to the development of friends, social networks, and social learning, when problems arise in school, students encounter enormous pressure (chapter 6. Adjustment: Problems in School). In Japan, schools can neither suspend nor expel students (p. 80); thus, in order to maintain order, middle schools "rely...Juku is therefore as much about socialization as studying."