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Asian scholar and black belt artist Connor Burke labors as a deshi—a student under the tutelage of a master warrior— a practice that draws him into the execution-style murder of a Japanese businessman in Brooklyn.

Connor's brother, an officer in the NYPD, enlists him to decipher the strange calligraphic writing left by the victim at the crime scene. The enigmatic message leads Connor to the lethal samurai heritage of a mysterious martial arts sensei, the foreboding world of a Tibetan clairvoyant, and finally the unknown wilderness of an elite mountain temple—where Connor's deadliest challenge awaits.

Deshi Details

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From Reader Review Deshi for online ebook

PJ Swanwick says

Cutting spiritual insight infuses martial arts thriller

Steeped in Eastern philosophy, rich with language that evokes the sweat and intensity of a Japanese dojo, and peppered with gritty cop talk and wry humor, John Donohue's "Deshi" smoothly folds mysticism into this top-notch action thriller.

Spiritual/metaphysical content: High. The villain is a martial arts sensei who teaches a potent New Age blend of Tibetan mysticism and the lethal heritage of the samurai. Connor Burke, master of the Japanese sword, is a thinking man's hero who embodies both the physical and spiritual aspects of the Asian disciplines. He is guided by a Tibetan rimpoché (lama), a clairvoyant mystic who grounds the story in spirituality.

My take: I loved the spare, elegant prose that reflects the spiritual simplicity of the story. Donohue underpins the intense action with depictions of a mystical martial arts culture that evoke the beauty of haiku. The characters--sensei Yamashita, deshi (student) Connor Burke, and the Tibetan rimpoché--are as finely drawn as the missing calligraphy scroll that holds the clues to solving the mystery. At once a gripping exploration of Eastern wisdom and a gritty cop thriller, "Deshi" fed both my desire to seek truth and my need for bloodthirsty catharsis in a satisfying balance of oriental philosophy and Western sensibility.

For more reviews of spiritual/metaphysical novels, see [Fiction For A New Age](#).

Randy Daugherty says

A student of kenjutsu Connor Burke is a at once home in tradition and its relationship to the new.; This was the second book featuring Connor Burke. Just a nice relaxing , get lost type book.

Selena says

If you liked the first one, this follows pretty much the same formula. It's interesting to see the inclusion of other martial arts and the Tibetan monks, though I got a little lost in the weeds for the motivations. The audio book was well read, and I think I might stick to the audio books for this series from now on if I can get a hold of them.

Jim says

A murder mystery, what I like about it is that the story takes us inside the martial arts community. Burke is a scholar of Asian culture and a black-belt, a character I find very engaging. He gets involved by his brother, a New York cop, in a case involving the murder of a Japanese businessman. On a personal note, I dipped my

toe into martial arts waters years ago when I took up the practice of aikido. It was interesting to me but I was unable to make the time commitment required to make progress. But I'm still interested in the mind-set and the philosophy involved in martial arts...

Alon Shalev says

If you love the martial art and Eastern spirituality, this is a great read. If not, and you are coming for the murder mystery, I'm not so sure. It gets a 4* because I do love the Eastern aspect.

Alon

Lizz Randall says

I listened to it on a CD. Really enjoyed the Asian pronunciations and the involvement of meditation and martial arts woven into the story.

Diane says

This author blends the philosophy and the day-to-day training of martial artists and a mystery involving the history and politics of China and Tibet.

It's a fascinating glimpse into the lives of both the sensei and the deshi as they train for hours every day, both mentally and physically. The demands and difficulties of the role of sensei are introduced in this book.

An excellent read for anyone interested in the martial arts or Buddhism.

Michael Peterson says

Ok, better than the first book in this series which I rate at 2 stars. I do so enjoy the martial arts and Asian aspects. I am picking the third and will see if we see additional improvements. Although not a great book, it is enjoyable.

Temple Dog says

This was a fun read. The plot development although sketchy at best, had provided greater depth and intrigue than its predecessor, Sensei.

I loved the center characters, Connor, his Sensei, Yamashita Mickey, and Art. The continuity from Sensei provided an engaging read and I look forward to reading the remainder of the Connor Burke and Yamashita Sensei series. You do not have to read Sensei to follow the plot; it merely adds an insider element.

I would recommend this book to anyone who is curious about Japanese sword and martial arts culture.

TD

Philip says

I have been on a Martial Arts Fiction kick, of late, and picked up Sensei a few months ago and have been looking forward to the Deshi ever since.

The book did not disappoint.

The character building was great and I especially enjoyed the struggle between student and teacher and the insight into that relationship.

I would like the fight scenes to be a bit more descriptive, but understand sometimes why they are not. I enjoy Burke a lot and definitely relate to him in a lot of ways (if only I had his technique!)

Looking forward to the next book and the upcoming release!

Drew says

A lot of reviewers claim this isn't as good as Donohue's first book in the Connor Burke series, but I disagree. This one is just as action-packed. Burke is enlisted by his brother to go undercover at a martial arts retreat.

Another book that shows traditional martial arts are boring.

Leo Delaney says

Enjoyable second part to the series

With an interest in martial arts (when younger!!) And an interest in Japanese culture and history, these are enjoyable books. The author has obviously trained himself and has that insight, but also shares little tidbits of knowledge which are interesting. There are lots of little things to like in the book. I'm looking forward to reading the next one although we will have to suspend reality, how many times can lightning strike, 3 more in the series apparently!!!

Bryan457 says

Kendo student Connor Burke is drawn into a perilous situation by his sensei, Yamashita, that ends up pitting them against a mysterious martial arts sensei named Kita Takanobu.

Yamashita is continuing to push Connor from being just a kendo student who is very unsure of himself and

his abilities, to being a warrior.

Ryan says

Suspense from the very beginning. I cldnt put this book away once I started. I NEED to get all the books in this series. IF u think tht this is only about karate and that's it, your wrong. GREAT storyline and I highly recommend this to everyone.

Jon Binford says

as true-to-life as these things can get. a great series.
