



THE CHHATTISGARH

After nomading for years in the topography of poetry, Stephen Gill has come back to fiction to free the reins of his passion in a considerably larger area. He is convinced that fiction has a healthy sizeable topography to nomad around. The blueprint of Stephen Gill's message remains the same in fiction as it is in his poetry which culminated in his two widely-commended modern epics. One epic is *Flame* that is about the damage caused by terrorism. The second epic *The Amputee* suggests licensing parenting to create a better peaceful society.

This time, Stephen Gill chooses a mythological region to work on his blueprint of live- and-let-live. His fiction *The Chhattisgarh* is about the rich mythology of India, the rajas, the macabre rituals of witchcraft, the assassination of Maharaja Pravir, the prophecies concerning Kohinoor, and a legend that connects Kohinoor with Lord Krishna. Above all, *The Chhattisgarh* is about politics, and Aboriginal peoples, called the Adivasi.

The Chhattisgarh is an informative and engaging narrative that focuses largely on the exotic nature of the mythologies around the jungles of Chhattisgarh, where the mega players of the Hindu epic *Ramayana* had ambled, as did Rajneesh Osho, a mystic of today. *The Chhattisgarh* is also about love between an Indian married

professor, who believes in the five thousand year old theory of detachment that has impacted most Indians, and Reghu, an India-born Canadian writer, who believes that the theory of detachment had sedated citizens to yield to dehumanizing external aggressions, and has resulted in the domestic political, business and social disconnections. Reghu questions the theory of detachment, because it also violates the central precept of live and let live. *The Chhattisgarh* is an evocative story that moves swiftly despite a density of details.