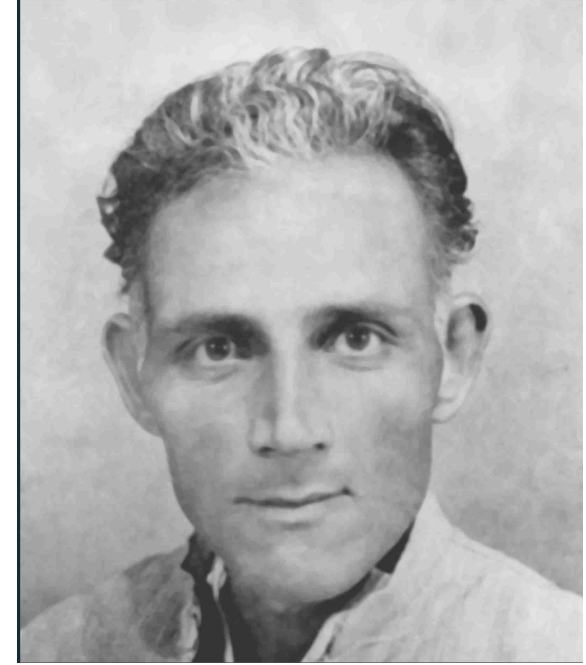# Gajānan Mādhav Muktibodh

Gajanan Madhav Muktibodh was born in a village in the Princely State of Gwalior, where his father was a *koṭvāl*, or police subinspector. Muktibodh grew up speaking both Marathi and Hindi; his brother, Sharaccandra, became a noted writer in Marathi.

After growing up in a series of villages and small town, he went to college in Ujjain and Indore. He lived and worked in several cities, before spending ten years in Nagpur, where he worked with All-India Radio and as an editor, before securing a position as a teacher in a small college in Rajnandgaon, about two hours from Raipur (and close to the massive Bhilai steel works) in what is today the state of Chattisgarh.

It was in Rajnandgaon that he suffered a stroke, which led to his death in Delhi in 1964. His first book of poetry, *Cāṁd kā muṁn ṭeḍhā hai* [The Moon has a Crooked Face] was published while he lay in a coma.

Muktibodh's reputation, already growing by the late 1950s, exploded following his death, and he has remained a crucial figure in Hindi literature for the past fifty years. A series of posthumous publications culminated with his collected works in 1980, which also saw the release of Mani Kaul's *Satah se uṭhā ādmī* [Man Rising from the Surface], a film based on his works.

Muktibodh was briefly a member of the Communist Party and a committed Marxist for most of his life, and the relation between his politics and his poetry shaped both his own critical positions, as well as his reception. Some of his most important criticism was shaped by a need to justify his work as realist despite its fantastic, allegorical character.

Muktibodh's wrote extensive criticism and short stories, but he is most well known for his long, fantastic narrative poems, of which *Aṁdhere meṁ* is the most famous and well-regarded. He onces described his shorter poems as simply incomplete, and critics have often considered his poetry as a single, muralistic opus, with one piece flowing into another, and images and motifs repeating and reshaping themselves.