



Gangubai Hangal: A Tribute—I

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This, March, Gangubai Hangal completed 75 years of her life. For more than 50 years she has been charming audiences with her music, both here and abroad. Certain facets of her personality—simplicity, warmth, humour that is sometimes at her own expense but never at the expense of others—become apparent to anybody who meets her. Over the last 40 years that I have known her, I have discovered other equally impressive traits. She is modern and enlightened, courageous, intelligent and kind. As Gangubai enters the last quarter of the proverbial hundred years allotted to humans, I would like to pay her a personal tribute in this essay, recounting what I know of a remarkable woman I have come to respect and love.

My husband and I got to know her quite by chance. Gangubai was invited to Patna by All India Radio in 1948, when the Patna station was