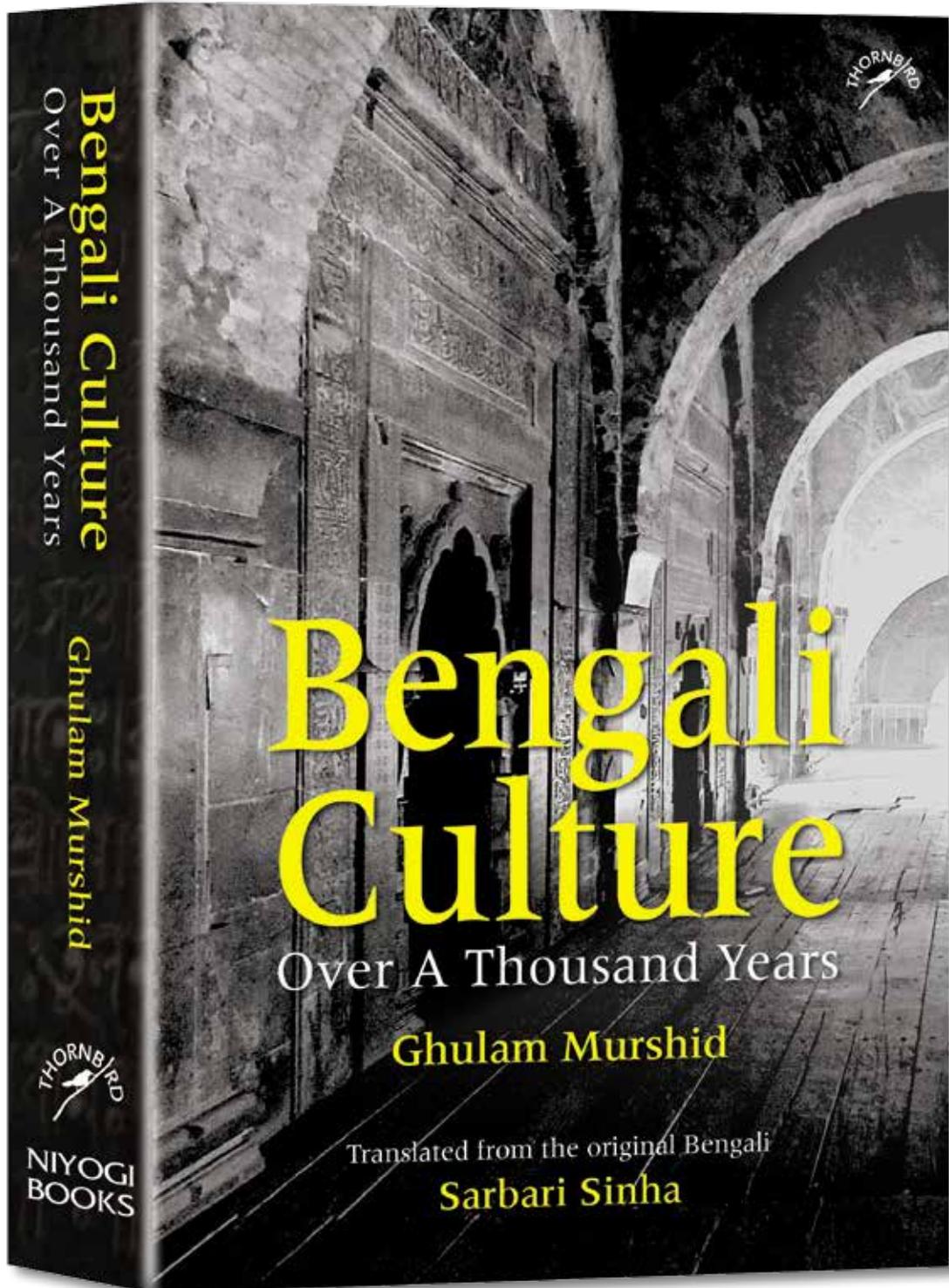


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Bengali Culture

Over A Thousand Years

by

Ghulam Murshid

Translated from the original Bengali

Sarbari Sinha

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Art, literature, music and other intellectual expressions of a particular society are together regarded as the culture of that society. Ideas, customs, and social behaviour of a particular people or society are also its 'culture'. Contrary to what we think, it is not easy to describe 'culture', nor is it easy to write the cultural history. Writing the history of Bengali culture is even more difficult because Bengali society is truly plural in its nature, made even more so by its political division.

The two main religious communities that share this culture are often more aware of the differences between them than the similarities. Nonetheless, the people remain bound by history and a shared language and literature. Ghulam Murshid's Bengali Culture over a Thousand Years is the first non-partisan and holistic discussion of Bengali culture. Written for the general reader, the language is simple and the style lucid. It shows how the individual ingredients of Bengali culture have evolved and found expression, in the context of political developments, and how certain individuals have moulded culture. Above all, the book presents the identity and special qualities of Bengali culture.

The book was originally published in Bengali in Dhaka in 2006. This is the first English translation.

The book brings authentic recorded history out of the walls of libraries and classrooms, making it a part of everyday conversation of non-academic readers. This also checks the entry of unfounded myths and bigotries into intellectual space.

Lends an in-depth account of the socio-political and cultural history of the two Bengals.

The translation uses lucid language and maintains the easy, racy conversational style of the Bengali original.



A former professor of Bengali, **Ghulam Murshid** has published more than a dozen books on subjects ranging from Bengali language and literature to women's studies and the

socio-cultural history of Bengal. Notable among his books are Reluctant Debutante: Response of Bengali Women to Modernization (1983); Lured by Hope: A Biography of Michael Madhusudan Dutt (1995); and Heart of a Rebel Poet: Letters of M. M. Dutt. His Bengali publications include books on the history of Bengali prose; history of Bengalis in Britain; emergence of Bangladesh; and the intimacy between Rabindranath Tagore and East Bengal.



Deputy Editor, Frontline, Chennai, **Sarbari Sinha** has worked with the print media (*The Statesman*, Kolkata; *Hindustan Times*, Kolkata and *New Indian Express*, Chennai). She joined Frontline in 2005.

She has published translations of Bengali short stories in various magazines including Sahitya Akademi's Indian Literature. Postgraduate in English Literature, Calcutta University (1994), Sinha attended seminars and translation workshops at the University of East Anglia in Norwich on a Charles Wallace Trust fellowship (2008).

