

Twitter Thread by Pankaj Saxena

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@PankajSaxena84



1. 'Hindu' is a word which is often objected to: both by the left-liberals and even by many Hindu nationalists. The disbelief in the word arises from the same historical truth: that the word 'Hindu' is not indigenous and it was a name given to us by the others, by the outsiders.



2. Whether it was a corruption of the word 'Sindhu' by the Iranians who couldn't pronounce 's' as 'h' is now a matter of great debate, but everyone agrees that the word itself is foreign in origin.

3. Anti-Hindus claim that since the word itself is foreign in origin there is no such thing as the Hindu society & Hinduism, & India is a British creation! They mistake the word for the civilization, and proving former's foreign origin, reject the very existence of the latter.

4. The Hindu Nationalists believe that since the name is foreign in origin, so we should completely reject it and use the name 'Bharat' for our country and 'Sanatana Dharma' and 'Sanatani' for referring to our Dharma and our people.

I disagree.

5. I have no problem with the phrase Sanatana Dharma and I use it quite often. But the word 'Hindu', and the phrase 'Hindu Dharma' are quite useful, easy and we have been using them for the past few centuries very very well to identify ourselves.

6. It would be a disaster to abandon this binding umbrella term in face of much adversity, when we face the threat of increasing faultlines in our society.

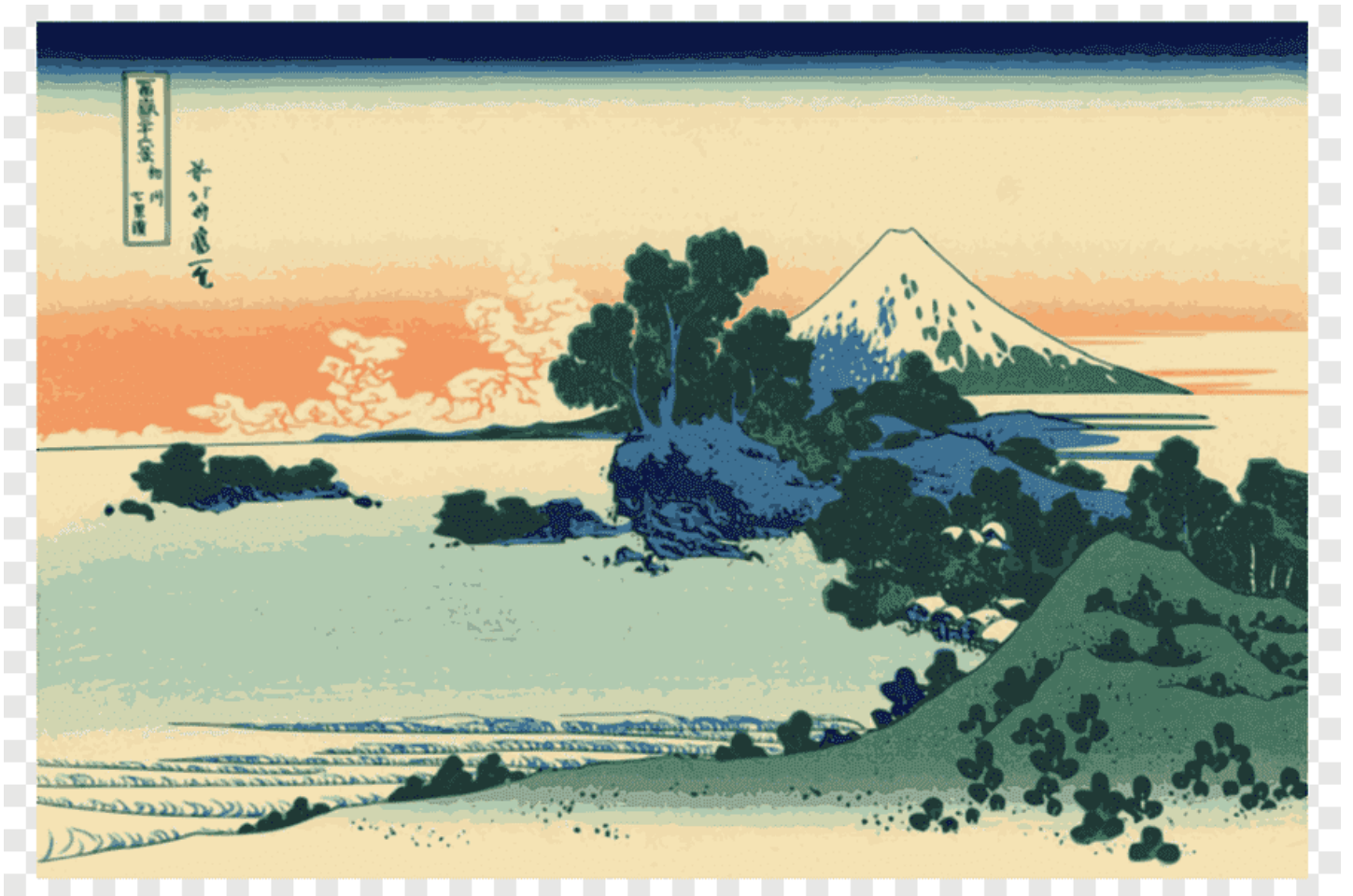
7. What is most curious is that fact that this phenomenon of knowing ourselves from a name given by others is not peculiar in the case of India, but is so universal in the case of all civilizations, that it is more of a norm rather than an exception.

Here are a few examples:

8. Greece is not called Greece in Greece. The Greeks call themselves the Hellas, and their country the Hellene Republic, and not Greece. The Romans called them Greece and Greeks.



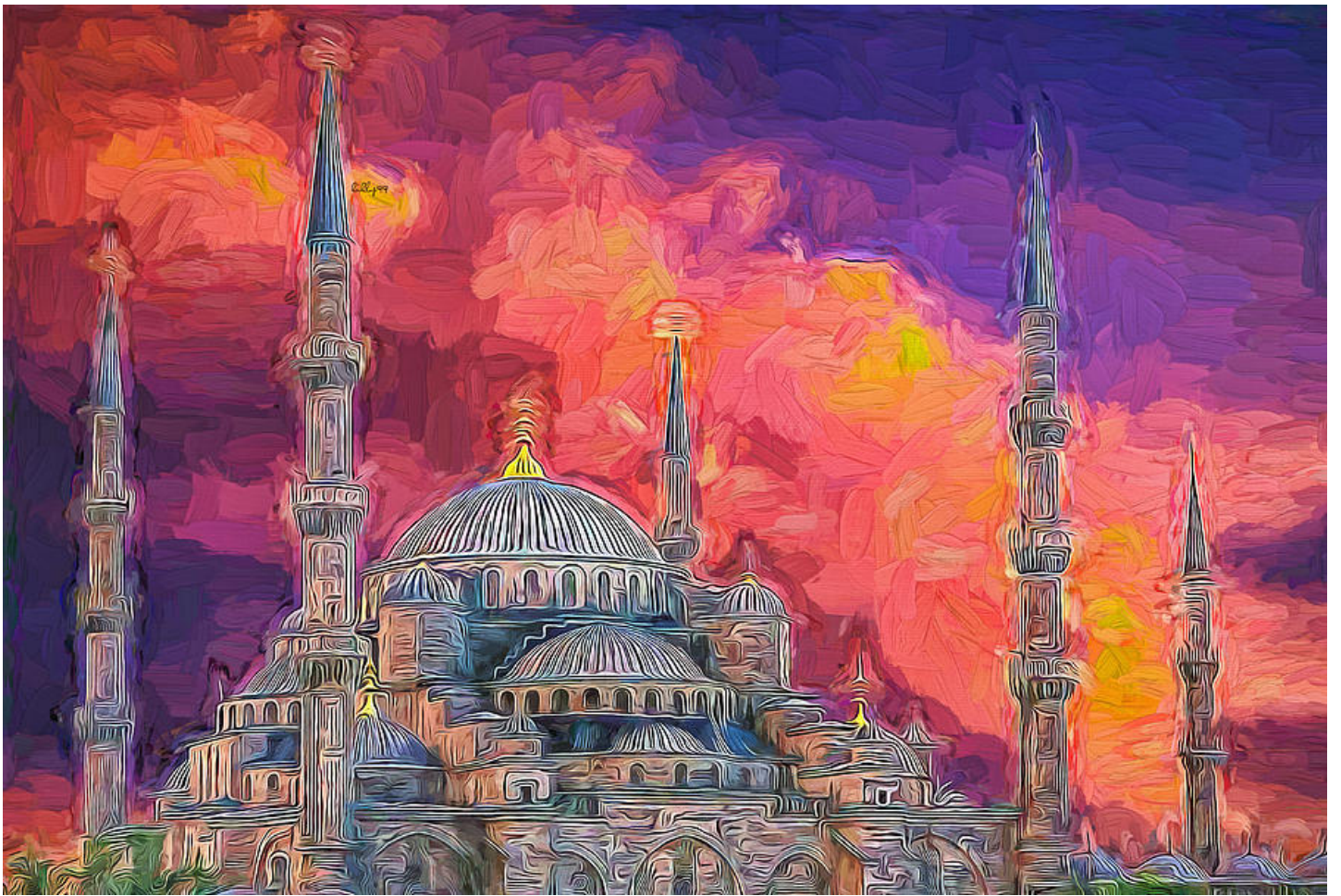
9. Japan is not called Japan in Japan. They call themselves Nippon. It is the Chinese who called them Japan and Japanese.



10. China is not called China in China. It is called Zong Guo. The Japanese and the Mongolians called them Chinese.



11. The Ottomans never called themselves Ottomans but quite simply as Muslims. It is the historians who later called them Ottomans.



12. The Byzantines never called themselves the Byzantines. It was the later historians who gave them that name.



13. It is often the case that a group, while communicating within the group, is seldom conscious of its oneness. Dealing with their inner problems the followers of this group are more occupied with their differences than similarities.

14. It is the outsiders who see them as a group, as a single unit and thus give them a name, which later sometimes comes to define the 'in' group. There is nothing odd about it.

15. In fact, it is a greater proof of the oneness of our civilization. If the out groups see us as 'one', it means it is an objective endorsement of our 'oneness'. It is more of a reason to feel united!

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