

Class VII  
History Chapter-1  
Tracing Changes  
Through  
1000 Years



# Introduction

Let's read something about tracing changes through a thousand years.



## **Key words**

Cartographer, Chronicler, Archives, Manuscripts, habitat, Patron, Jati, Foreigner

## **Define the terms**

- (1) Cartographer-** The artist who is skilled in drawing or making maps.
- (2) Manuscripts –** The original script written by the Author in his/her handwriting.
- (3) Habitat-** The living condition of specie.
- (4) Chronicler-** One who writes history.
- (5) Region –** The particular area designated or occupied by a certain group or empire.



## Points to be remember:

- (1) **Seventh century AD---** The teachings of the holy Quran brought to India.
- (2) **1154**—Map of the Indian Subcontinent made by al-Idrisi.
- (3) **1266-1287-** Reign of the Delhi Sultan Ghiysuddin Bal ban.
- (4) **1356**—Ziyauddin Barani wrote his first chronicle. He wrote another version two years later.
- (5) **The subcontinent saw** the new food like potatoes, corn , chillies tea and coffee.




# What will I learn in this lesson?

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## Objectives

- familiarise the student with the changing names of the land of India
- discuss broad historical trends over the last 2,000 years
- show examples of the kinds of sources that historians use for studying that period, i.e., buildings, travellers' and administrators' chronicles, paintings, coins, inscriptions, documents, folk music, instruments, and literature.

## Overview

- All things change with time, and we can learn a lot from looking at how ancient people lived.
  - Historians learn about history from old coins, inscriptions, styles of architecture, and written records. They also collect and archive (record and store) manuscripts (original writings) when available.
  - When people move between countries or continents, they take their life-styles and ideas to new places. This is how, over time, old religions, sciences, cultures, and traditions change and become new ones.
  - It is easy to understand History if we divide the past into large parts (called periods) that have many things in common.
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## Introduction

- A map of the Indian sub-continent, made by a famous Arab geographer -- al-Idrisi -- in 1154, shows south India in the north and Sri Lanka at the top. But another map of the same area made by a French cartographer (a person who makes maps) in 1720 is quite different from what al-Idrisi made.
- Historians have to be very careful when they use old things to study history, because the methods of making maps and texts differ from time to time, and not everything written in the past was correct.



# Historians and their Sources

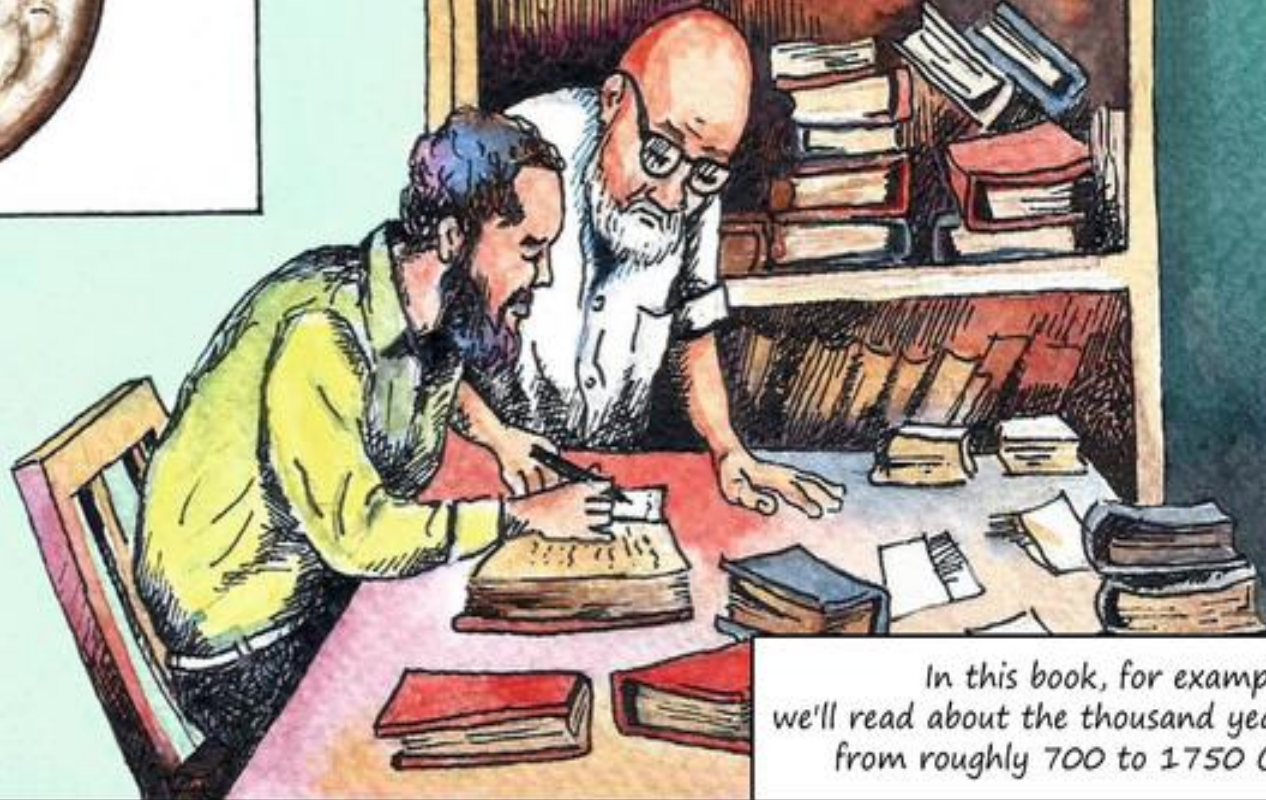




## Historians and their Sources



Just as you're using this graphic page to learn about history, historians also use different sources to learn about the past, depending on the period they want to study and what exactly they're looking for.



In this book, for example, we'll read about the thousand years from roughly 700 to 1750 CE.



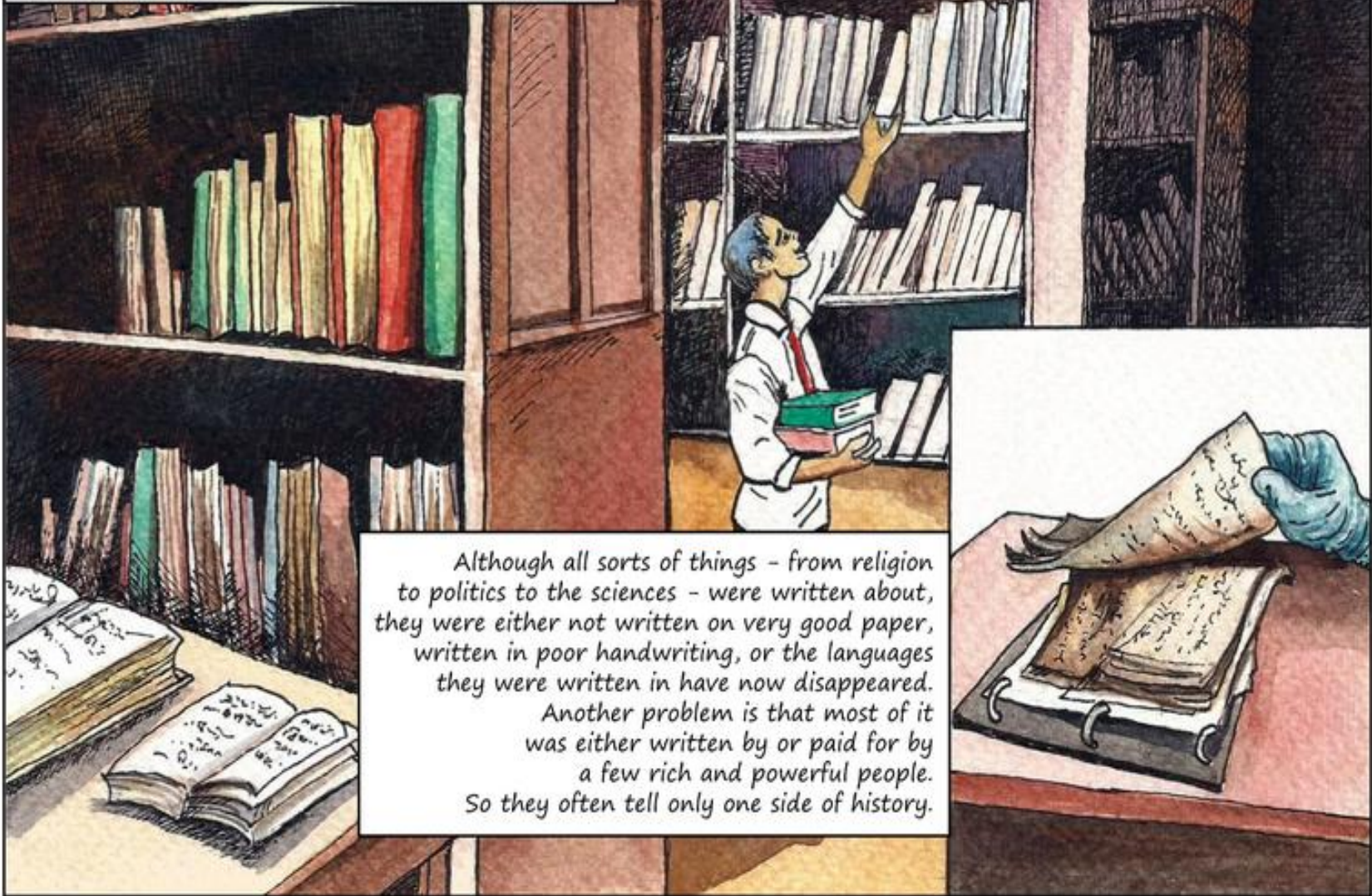
# Historians and Their Sources

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- Historians rely upon old coins, inscription, architecture, and textual records for information for their studies.
- In the medieval period, gradually, paper became widely available and cheaper. People started using it to write holy texts, chronicles of rulers, letters and teachings of saints, petitions and judicial records, and for registers of accounts and taxes.
- Manuscripts provide a lot of information to historians; however, they are difficult to use as they manuscripts were handwritten.
- To know what the author had actually written, historians have to read different manuscript versions of the same text.



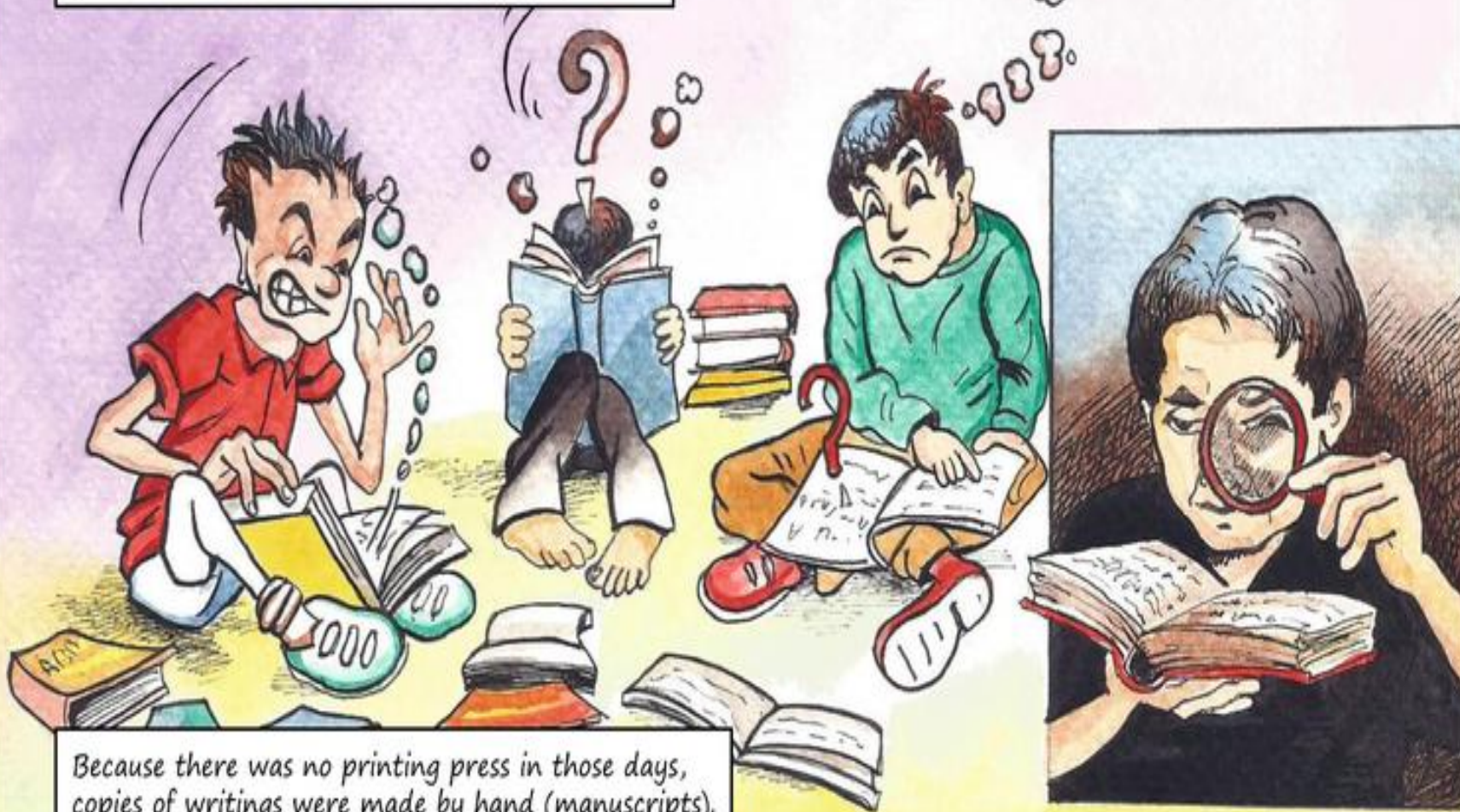
To study that time, historians as usual use coins, writings/inscriptions, and architectures. But as paper had become cheaper around that time, there are more written records than other sources.



Although all sorts of things - from religion to politics to the sciences - were written about, they were either not written on very good paper, written in poor handwriting, or the languages they were written in have now disappeared. Another problem is that most of it was either written by or paid for by a few rich and powerful people. So they often tell only one side of history.



If you have a friends who have bad handwriting and if you have ever tried copying their notes, you know that it is not a very easy thing to do.



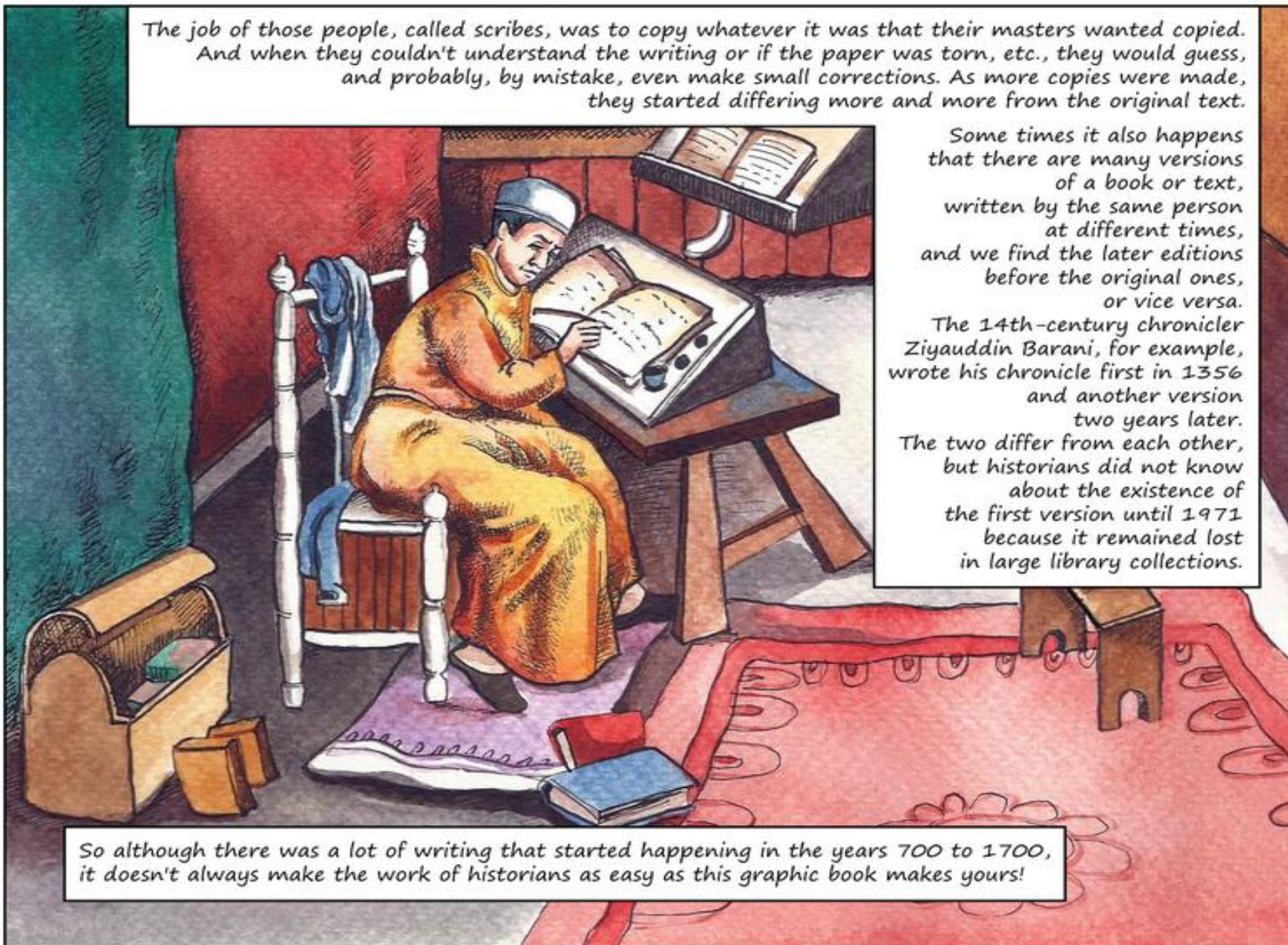
Because there was no printing press in those days, copies of writings were made by hand (manuscripts).



The job of those people, called scribes, was to copy whatever it was that their masters wanted copied. And when they couldn't understand the writing or if the paper was torn, etc., they would guess, and probably, by mistake, even make small corrections. As more copies were made, they started differing more and more from the original text.

Some times it also happens that there are many versions of a book or text, written by the same person at different times, and we find the later editions before the original ones, or vice versa.

The 14th-century chronicler Ziyauddin Barani, for example, wrote his chronicle first in 1356 and another version two years later. The two differ from each other, but historians did not know about the existence of the first version until 1971 because it remained lost in large library collections.



So although there was a lot of writing that started happening in the years 700 to 1700, it doesn't always make the work of historians as easy as this graphic book makes yours!

## New Social and Political Groups

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- The 1000 years between 700 to 1750 was a period of large-scale economic, political, social, and cultural changes.
- There were many developments in technologies. For example, the Persian wheel for irrigation, the spinning wheel for weaving, and powerful firearms for big fights were invented in that period.
- People who travelled in search of opportunities not only brought new ideas but also new foods and beverages with them.
- Many 'Rajputs' became famous in India before the rise of the Mughal empire; initially the term only included sons of rulers, but later it also included soldiers and commanders. Marathas, Sikhs, Jats, Ahoms, and Kayasthas also become important in the Indian subcontinent in that period.
- Many forests were cleared to make land for agriculture. Peasants became an important part of the society, and started receiving help from the rulers if they paid taxes.
- Different groups of *jatis* or sub-castes came into existence on the basis of occupation, and rules and regulations made by the *Jati panchayat* were enforced by an assembly of elder people.



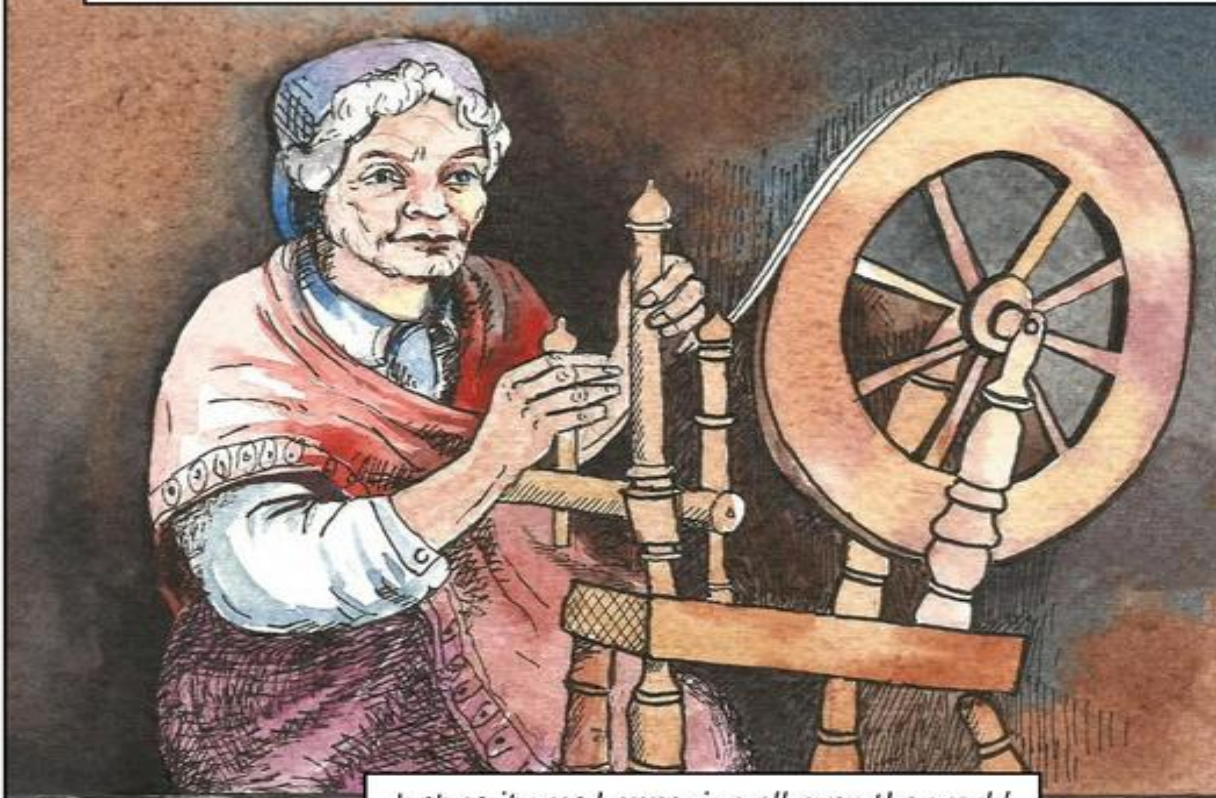


New Social and  
Political Groups

*The study of the thousand years between 700 and 1750 is a challenge also because it was a period of many developments the world over. New technologies such as the Persian spinning wheel in irrigation,*



the spinning wheel in weaving, and more animals and weapons in combat brought about many changes in the lives of many people in a very short time.



Just as it was happening all over the world, new foods and beverages such as potatoes, corn, chillies, tea, and coffee, were brought to the Indian subcontinent.





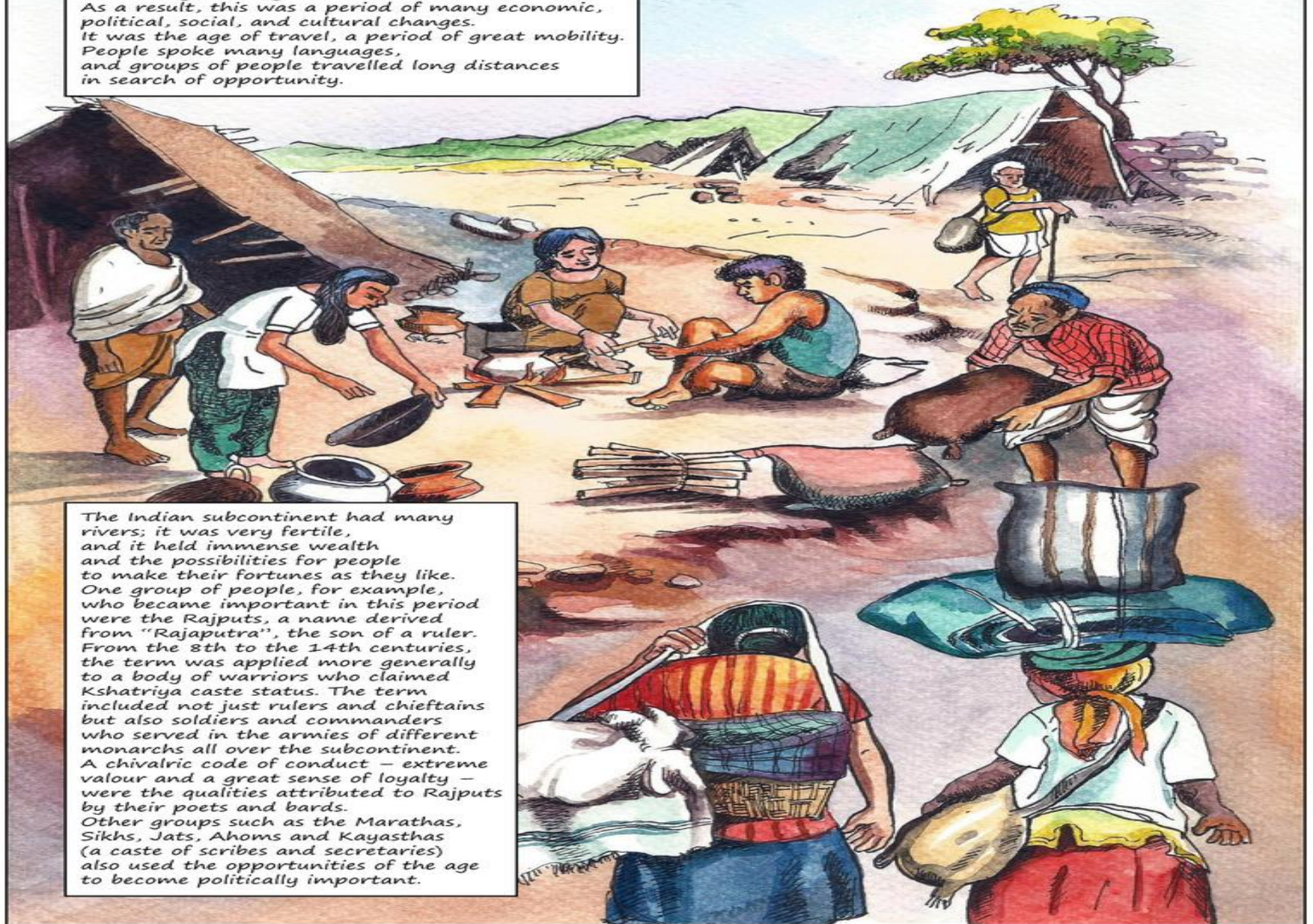
## New and Old Terminologies

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- Historical records, languages, and the meaning of words change with the time.
- In the Mughal era, 'Hindustan' was the most common term for India.
- In the 13th century, the term Hindustan was used by the Persians and Mughals to mean the areas around the Indus-river valley in north-west India (Punjab, Haryana, and the lands between the Ganga and the Yamuna rivers), but not south India.
- Babur also used the term Hindustan to explain the geographies and cultures of the subcontinent in the early 16th century, and that was similar to the way Amir Khusrau (a famous poet) did it in the 14th century.
- Historians have to check the meanings of the terms and words they use, as they change from time to time. For example, today we use the term 'foreigner' to mean someone who is not an Indian, but in the medieval period, it meant any stranger who was not a part of a society or culture.

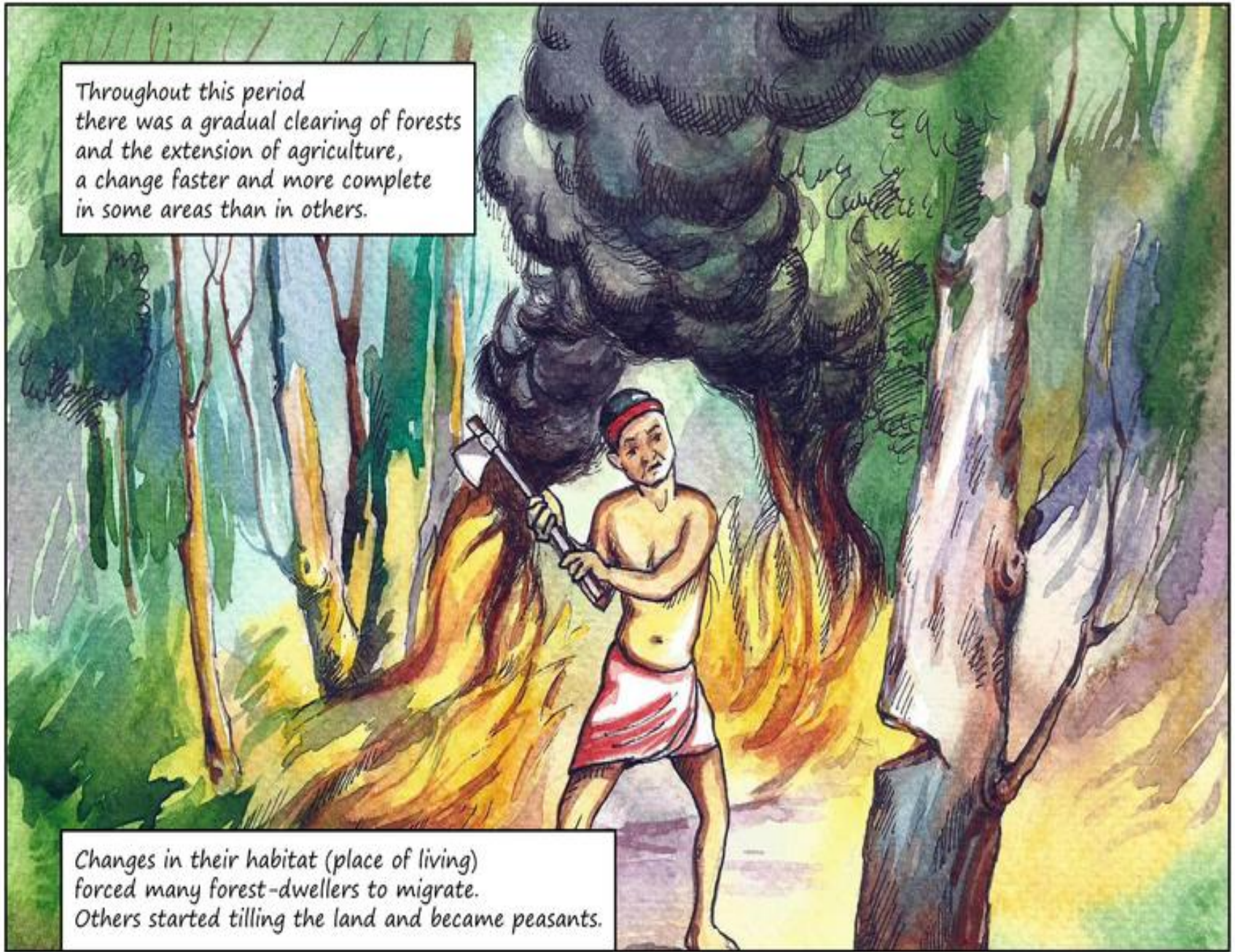
Remember that all these innovations – new technologies and crops – came with people who brought many other ideas with them as well. As a result, this was a period of many economic, political, social, and cultural changes. It was the age of travel, a period of great mobility. People spoke many languages, and groups of people travelled long distances in search of opportunity.

The Indian subcontinent had many rivers; it was very fertile, and it held immense wealth and the possibilities for people to make their fortunes as they like. One group of people, for example, who became important in this period were the Rajputs, a name derived from "Rajaputra", the son of a ruler. From the 8th to the 14th centuries, the term was applied more generally to a body of warriors who claimed Kshatriya caste status. The term included not just rulers and chieftains but also soldiers and commanders who served in the armies of different monarchs all over the subcontinent. A chivalric code of conduct – extreme valour and a great sense of loyalty – were the qualities attributed to Rajputs by their poets and bards. Other groups such as the Marathas, Sikhs, Jats, Ahoms and Kayasthas (a caste of scribes and secretaries) also used the opportunities of the age to become politically important.





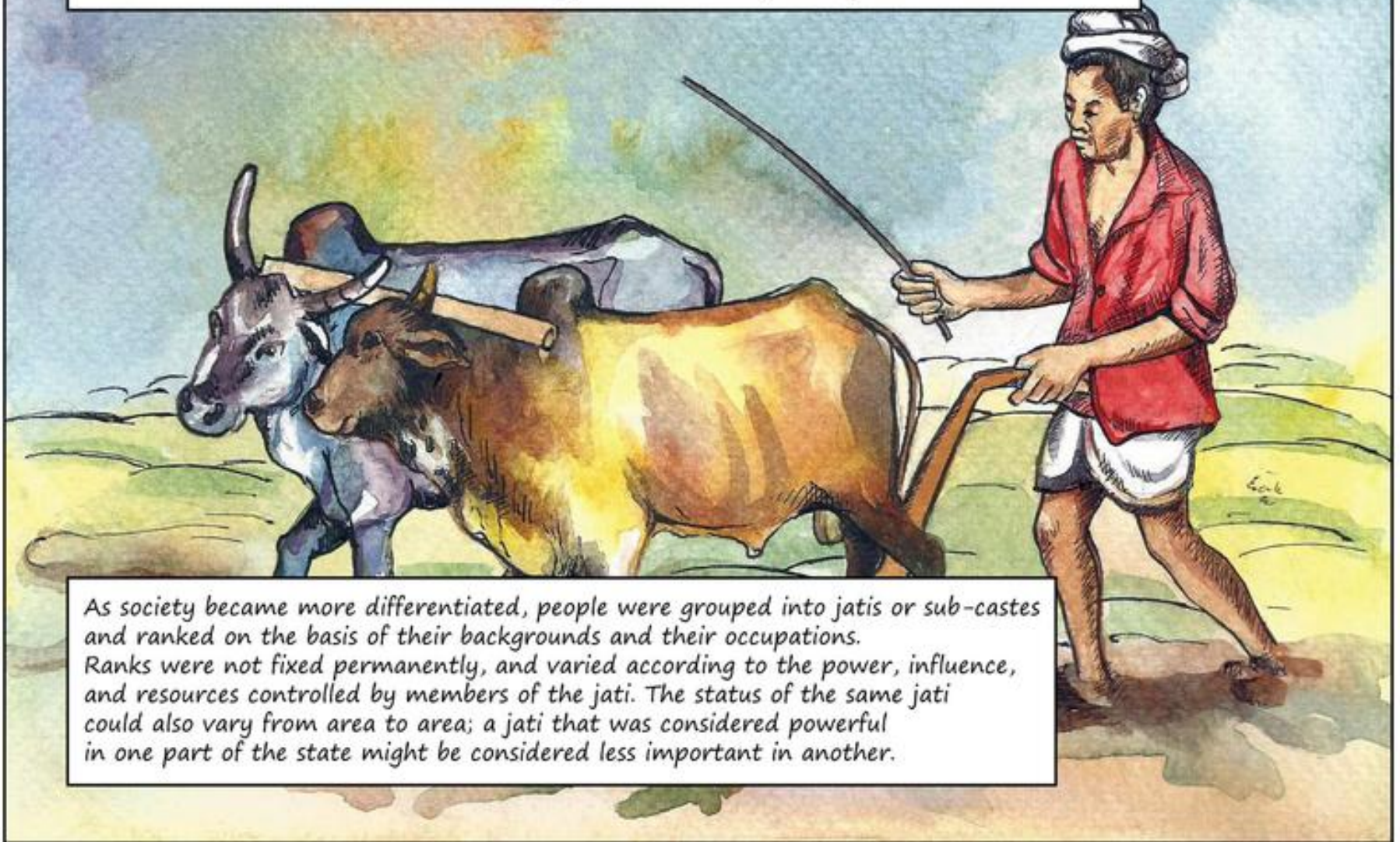
Throughout this period there was a gradual clearing of forests and the extension of agriculture, a change faster and more complete in some areas than in others.



Changes in their habitat (place of living) forced many forest-dwellers to migrate. Others started tilling the land and became peasants.



These new peasant groups gradually began to be influenced by regional markets, chieftains, priests, monasteries and temples. They became part of large complex societies, and were required to pay taxes and offer goods and services to local lords. As a result, major economic and social differences came up amongst peasants. Some possessed more productive land, others also kept cattle, and some combined artisanal work with agricultural activity during the lean season.



As society became more differentiated, people were grouped into jatis or sub-castes and ranked on the basis of their backgrounds and their occupations. Ranks were not fixed permanently, and varied according to the power, influence, and resources controlled by members of the jati. The status of the same jati could also vary from area to area; a jati that was considered powerful in one part of the state might be considered less important in another.

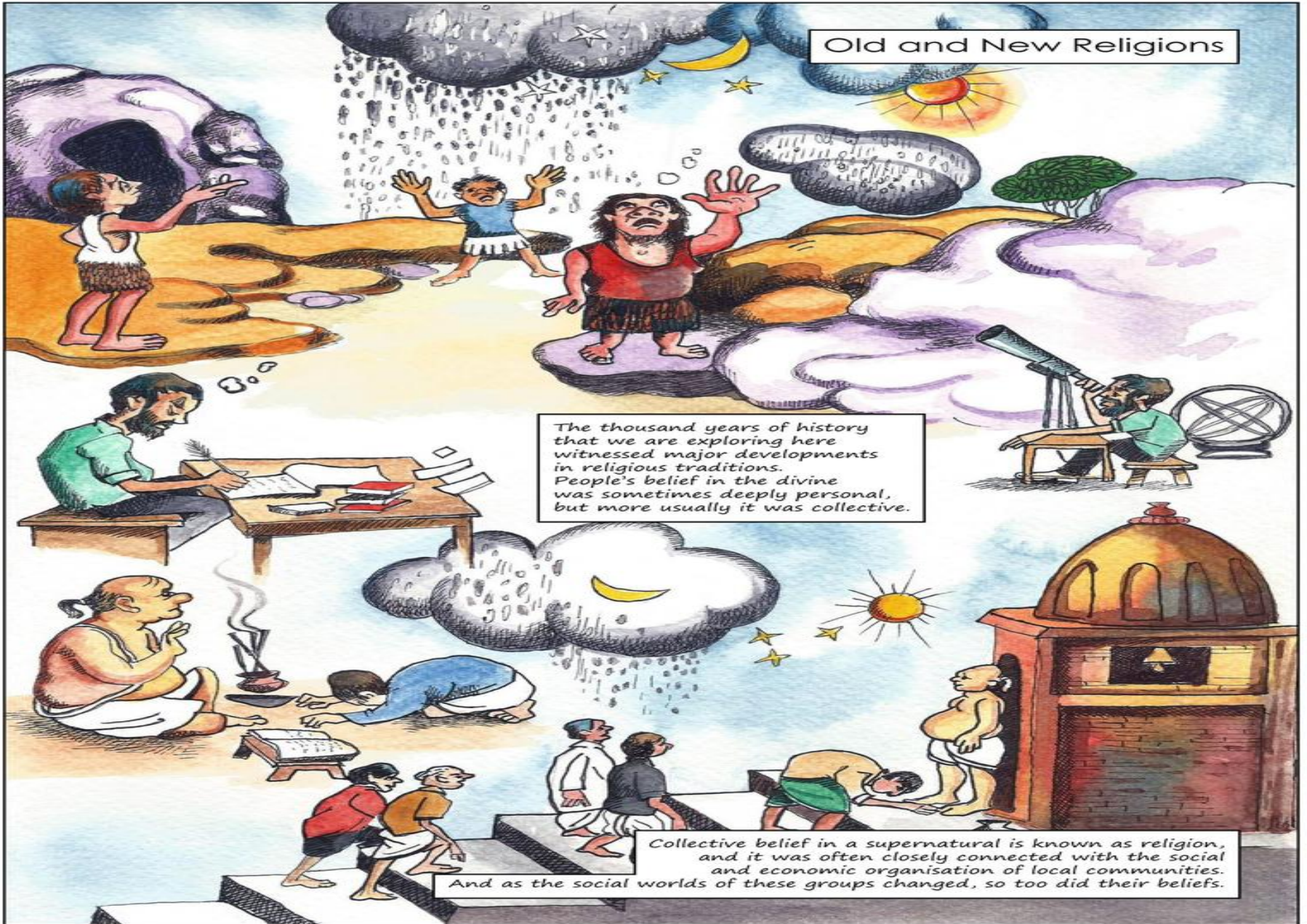
## Old and New Religions

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- In the thousand years between 700 and 1750, there were many changes in the religions and beliefs of people, and they were connected to the larger socio-economic trends across the world.
- Hinduism became stronger in India; many deities came to be worshiped, and royal families built huge temples.
- Brahmins mastered mathematics and Sanskrit, and the knowledge of astronomy and weather patterns won them the support of farmers and royal families alike, and higher positions in the society.
- The idea of an individual's *bhakti* (direct worship of a personal deity), without the need for priests, also became popular.
- New religions like Islam entered the Indian subcontinent through foreign merchants and migrants; many powerful rulers such as Akbar and Aurangzeb were great followers of Islam.
- Quran is the holy book of Islam, and it asks all Muslims to believe in one God - Allah; there are two main faiths in Islam: the Shia and the Sunni.

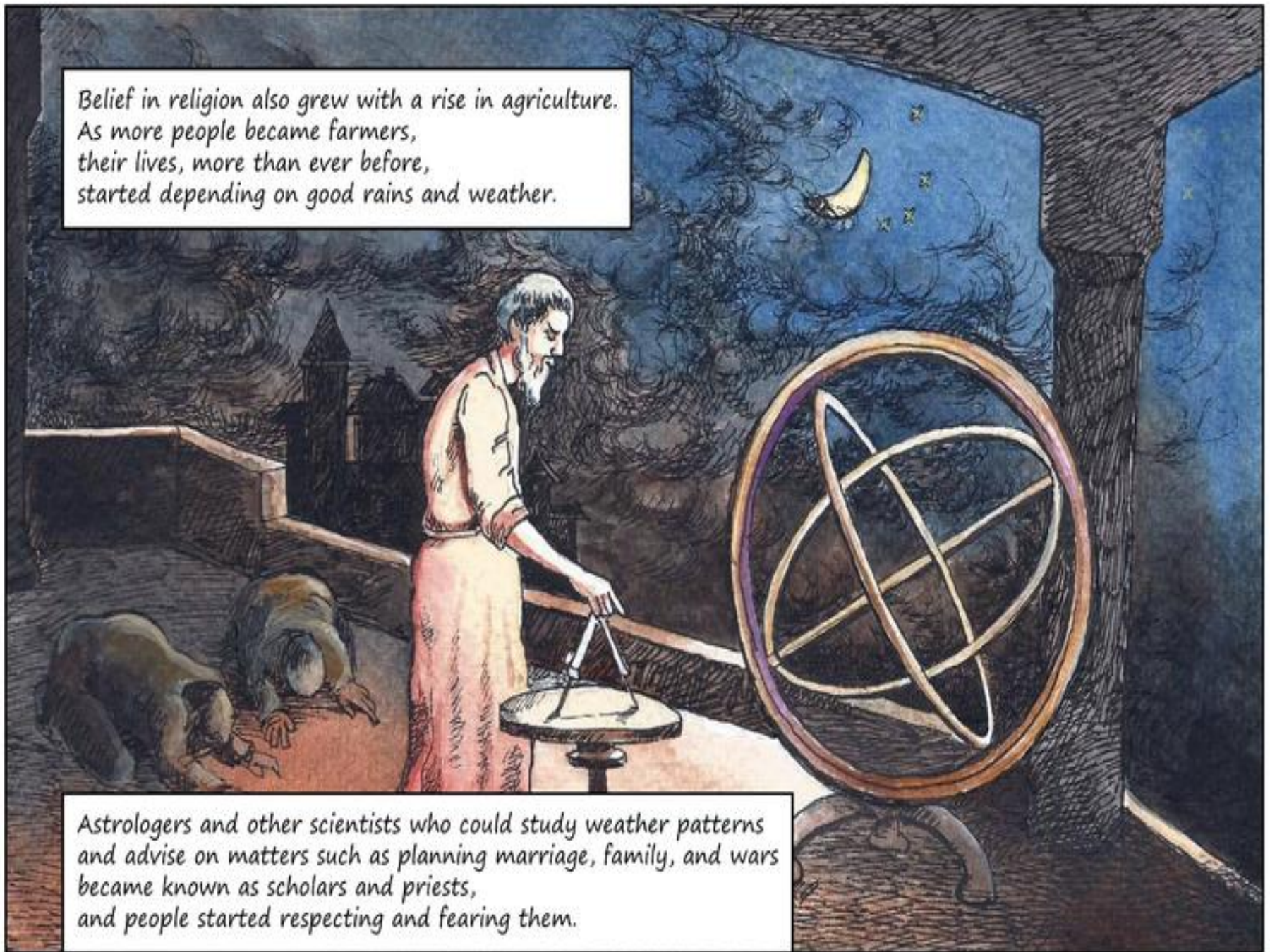


## Old and New Religions





Belief in religion also grew with a rise in agriculture. As more people became farmers, their lives, more than ever before, started depending on good rains and weather.



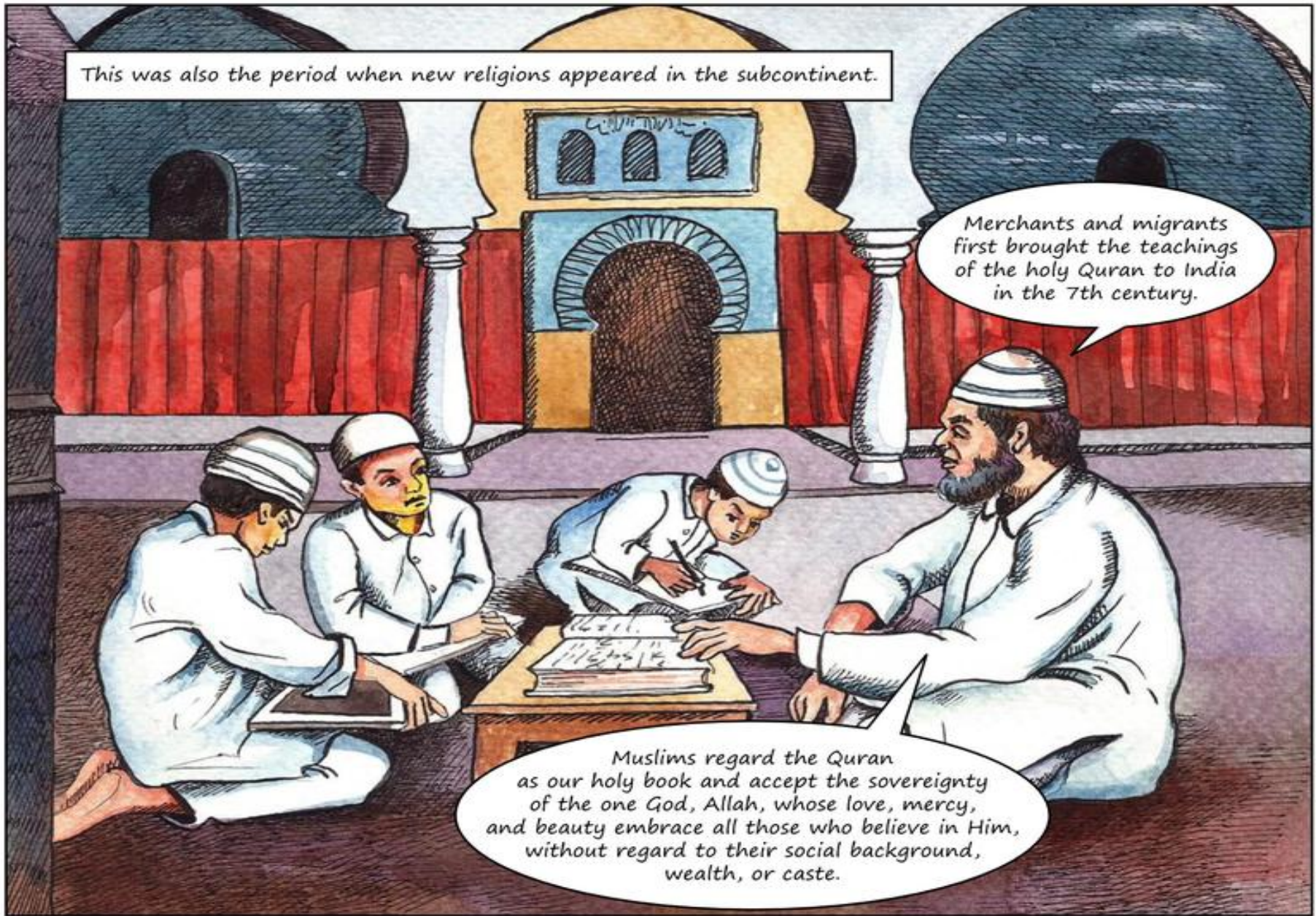
Astrologers and other scientists who could study weather patterns and advise on matters such as planning marriage, family, and wars became known as scholars and priests, and people started respecting and fearing them.



This was also the period when new religions appeared in the subcontinent.

Merchants and migrants first brought the teachings of the holy Quran to India in the 7th century.

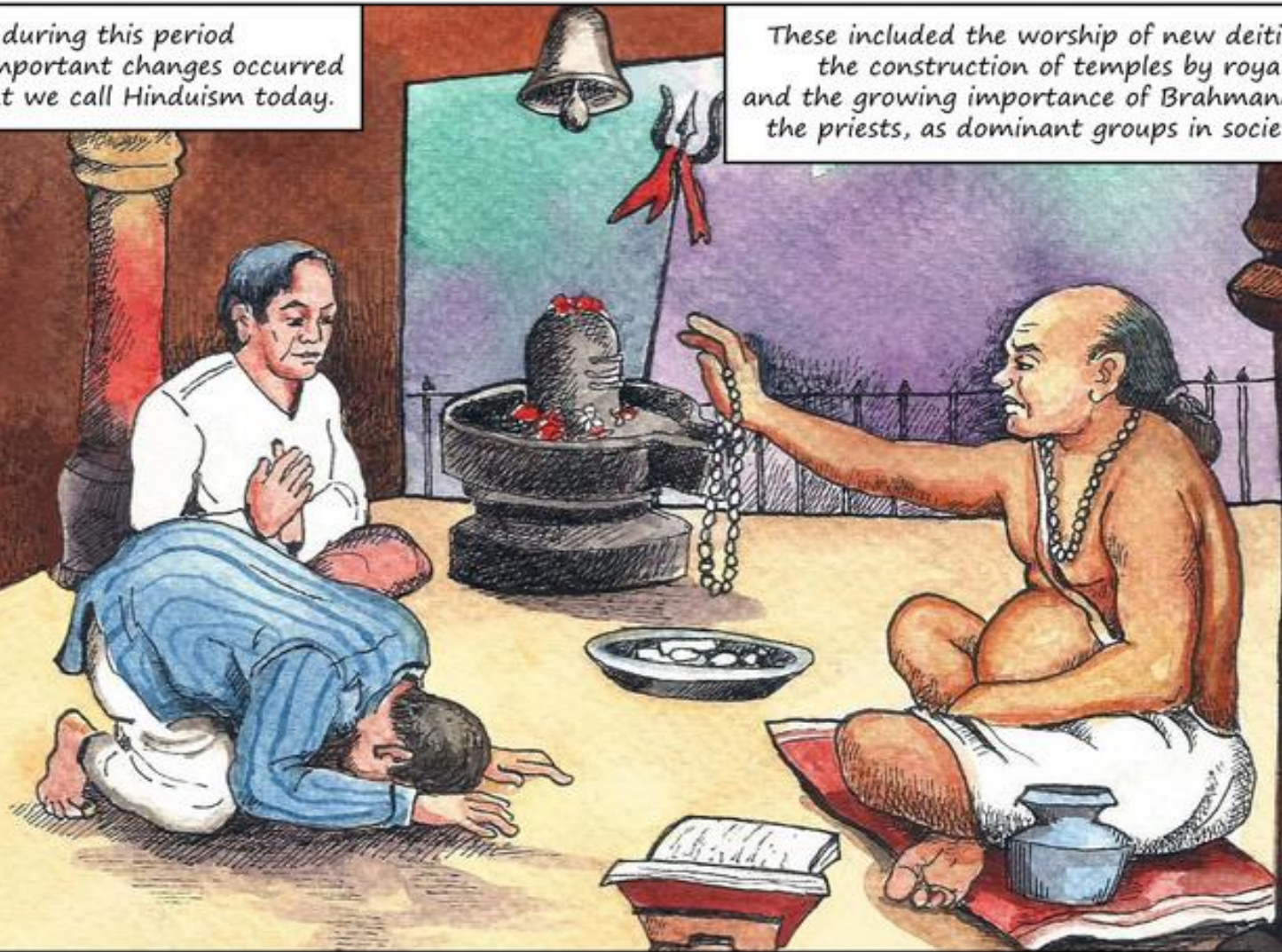
Muslims regard the Quran as our holy book and accept the sovereignty of the one God, Allah, whose love, mercy, and beauty embrace all those who believe in Him, without regard to their social background, wealth, or caste.





It was during this period that important changes occurred in what we call Hinduism today.

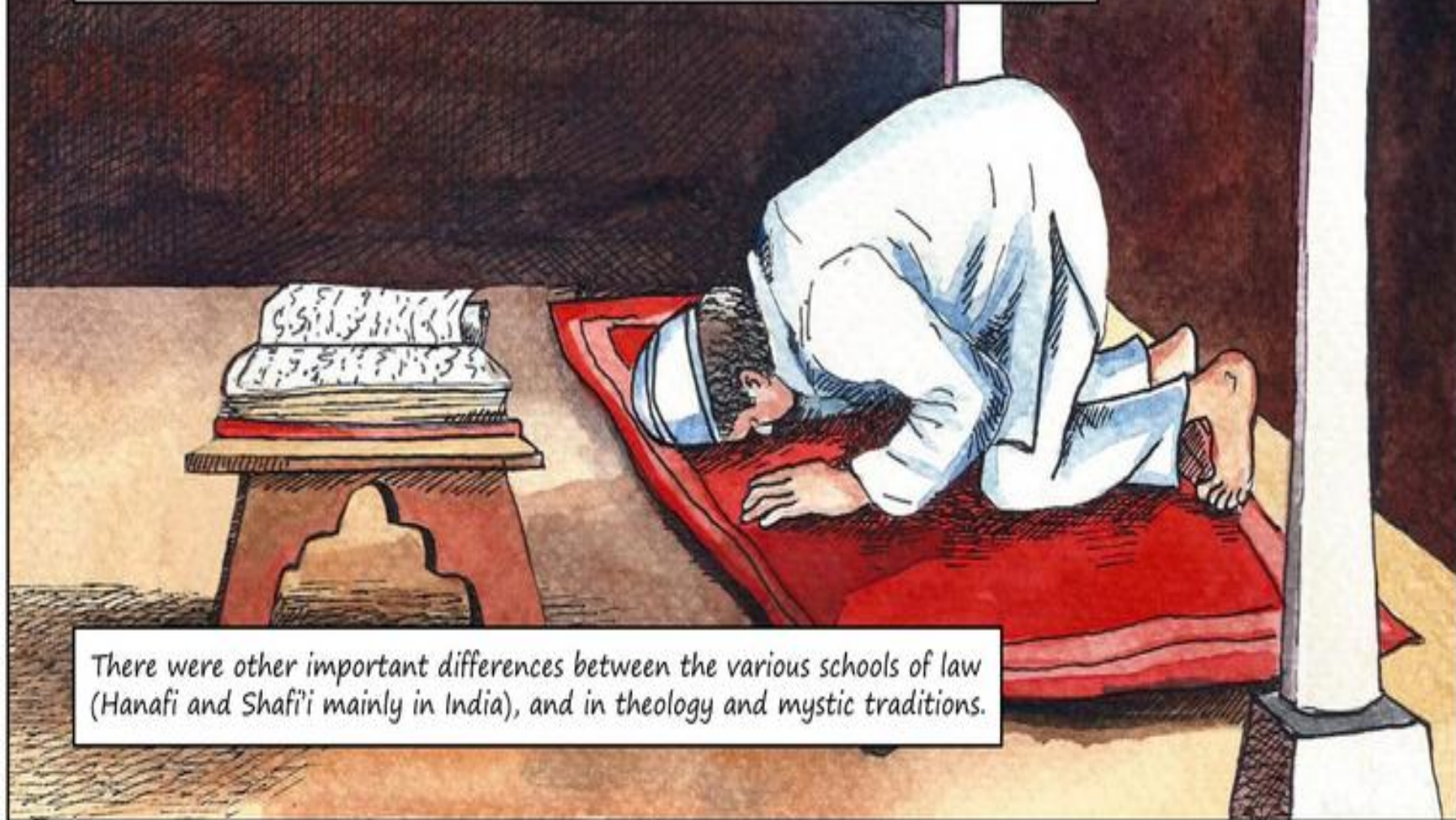
These included the worship of new deities, the construction of temples by royalty and the growing importance of Brahmanas, the priests, as dominant groups in society.



Their knowledge of Sanskrit texts earned the Brahmanas a lot of respect in society. Their dominant position was enforced by the support of their patrons — new rulers searching for prestige. One of the major developments was the emergence of the idea of bhakti — of a loving, personal deity that devotees could reach without help from priests or elaborate rituals.



Many rulers were patrons of Islam and the ulama (learned theologians and jurists.) And like Hinduism, Islam was interpreted in a variety of ways by its followers. There were the Shia Muslims who believed that the Prophet's son-in-law, Ali, was the legitimate leader of the Muslim community, and the Sunni Muslims who accepted the authority of the early leaders (khalifas) of the community, and the succeeding Khalifas.



There were other important differences between the various schools of law (Hanafi and Shafi'i mainly in India), and in theology and mystic traditions.

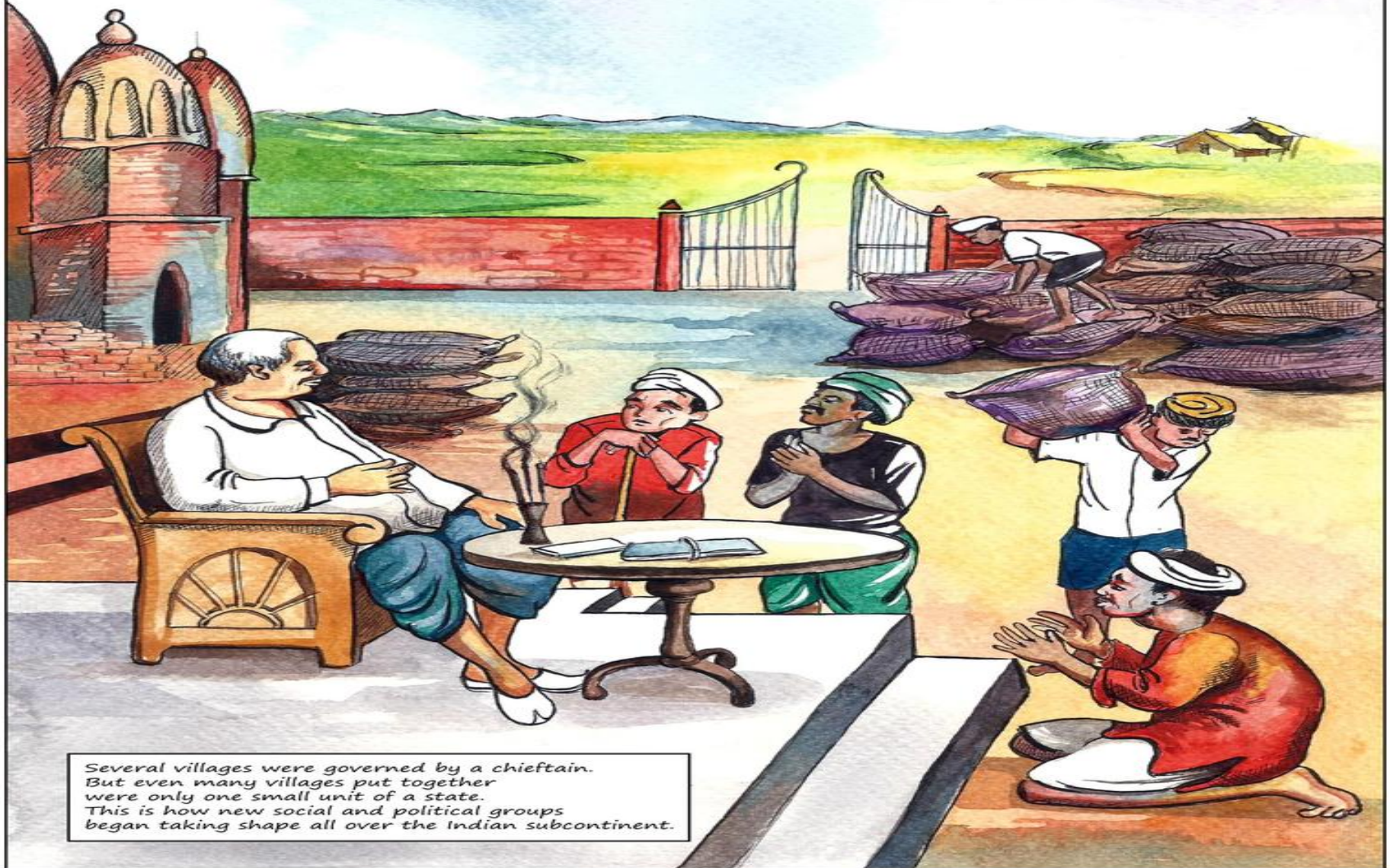
## Regions and Empires

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- The Cholas and the Mughals controlled many parts of India, from Bengal to Afghanistan, and historians are still trying to find the reason why rulers kept claiming to have control over other regions.
- The Chola, Khilji, Tughluqs, and Mughal dynasties built big empires, known as pan-regions; however, all those empires were not equally stable, and often fought with each other.
- Mughal empire declined and the British Raj became more powerful in India in the 18th century.
- With the decline of the Mughal empire, many small rulers and kingdoms came up across India. But almost all of them continued to be influenced and affected by the major changes happening across the Indian sub-continent.



Jatis framed their own rules and regulations to manage the conduct of their people in their communities. These regulations were enforced by an assembly of elders, described in some areas as the jati panchayat. But jatis were also required to follow the rules of their villages.



Several villages were governed by a chieftain. But even many villages put together were only one small unit of a state. This is how new social and political groups began taking shape all over the Indian subcontinent.

## Thinking about Time and Historical Periods

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- Time is not simply the passing of hours, days, or years, but it is the reflection of changes that happen everywhere, all the time. But we can study time in an easier way by dividing it into periods or eras.
- A British historian divided the Indian history into three periods: Hindu, Muslim, and British, but no one follows that classification today because it is considered very narrow.
- Instead, the period between 700 and 1750 is called the 'medieval' period, meaning it was the time between the 'old' and the 'modern' periods.
- During the medieval period, India became very rich and powerful, and attracted even more merchants and governments from around the world, especially Europe.

**Thank You**

