

CHAPTER
19

Section 1

HISTORYMAKERS **Vasco da Gama**
Sailing into History

"May the devil take you! What brought you here?"—spoken by Tunisian merchants who sighted Vasco da Gama in India (1498)

The tiny kingdom of Portugal had made a major seafaring breakthrough in 1488, when Bartolomeu Dias sailed to the Cape of Good Hope at the southern tip of Africa. However, it was not until the mid-1490s that King Manuel of Portugal decided to send another voyage south. He chose a little-known sailor named Vasco da Gama, and he took the first step in creating a Portuguese trading empire in Asia.

Born around 1460, much of da Gama's early life is unknown. It is believed that he was born to poor but noble parents and that his father served as governor of Sines, the town where da Gama was born. He had two older brothers, who both later joined him on his trips. He remained an obscure figure until 1492. That year he captured some French ships in a Portuguese port during a period of hostility between the two European powers.

In 1495, King Manuel was making preparations to send an expedition around Africa to reach the valuable spice markets of India. He had named da Gama's father to head the voyage, but the old man died that year. As a result, Manuel chose da Gama.

In July 1497, da Gama departed with four ships. Rather than follow the West African coast, he swung far out into the Atlantic Ocean, hoping to avoid the areas of little wind called the doldrums. It was not until late November that the group passed the Cape of Good Hope. It took them another five months to work their way up the eastern coast of Africa, stopping at several ports along the way.

These ports were largely controlled by Muslim merchants. Though many of these merchants welcomed the Portuguese, some Muslim ships attacked the Portuguese explorers in Mombasa, located in modern Tanzania. In da Gama's next stop in modern Kenya, the ruler there gave the Portuguese an expert guide. He led them across the Indian Ocean to Calicut, the center of the Indian spice trade. They landed there on May 20, 1498, more than ten months after they had left Portugal.

Da Gama was unable to meet the leader of Calicut for ten days, however. Furthermore, when the two men did meet, the conference went badly.

The Portuguese had brought few goods of value to India, and the ruler expected gold in return for the spices that da Gama desired. Relations soured, and the Indians and the Portuguese both took prisoners. Later, the captured people were exchanged, but in August of 1498, da Gama and his crew left for home after hearing rumors of plots against them. They only had a small cargo of spices, but they had shown that the route could work.

The return voyage was more difficult than the journey there. Thirty men died of disease, including da Gama's brother Paulo, who had commanded one of the ships. Da Gama finally reached Portugal on September 9, 1499, two years after having left. He was given a hero's welcome.

A second voyage to Asia, commanded by another man, produced poor relations with the Indians, and the king called on da Gama again. In 1502, he set out with a much larger fleet of 20 ships that were armed for hostilities. When he reached the Indian coast, da Gama captured a ship loaded with Muslims making a pilgrimage, then killed them and burned the ship. When the ruler of Calicut refused to cooperate with da Gama, da Gama had his sailors shell the city. After picking up a cargo of spices in more friendly cities, he returned to Portugal.

Da Gama's actions raised alarms among the Muslims. They formed an alliance with the rulers of Egypt and other Indian cities to resist the Portuguese. From then on, the Portuguese built their trading empire by force, not by peaceful commerce. Da Gama made one more trip to Asia. Named Viceroy of India by the king, he was supposed to restore order but died shortly after arriving there.

Questions

1. **Determining Main Ideas** What hardships did da Gama and his crew suffer during the first voyage?
2. **Drawing Conclusions** Why did the Portuguese not enjoy more success in their first voyage?
3. **Making Inferences** Why did the Muslims oppose the Portuguese arrival?

HISTORYMAKERS Tokugawa Ieyasu

Patient Planner

"The traditional picture of Ieyasu is one of a crafty and grasping old man . . . On the contrary, self-control and a truly marvelous patience stamped his character from childhood."—historians R. H. P. Mason and J. G. Caiger, A History of Japan (1973)

There is a story about the three men who, from the 1560s to the early 1600s, managed to unite Japan under one rule. The leaders are all discussing a caged bird that will not sing. Oda Nobunaga vows, "I'll make it sing." Toyotomi Hideyoshi threatens, "I'll kill it if it doesn't sing." But Tokugawa Ieyasu has patience. "I'll wait until it sings," he says.

Patience was not Ieyasu's only virtue. He also possessed a first-rate mind, political insight, and superb military skill. Armed with these qualities, he finished the job that Nobunaga and Hideyoshi had begun. He placed all of Japan under one central authority—himself—and then passed that power on to others in his family.

Born in 1543, Ieyasu's early life provided little evidence of his future greatness. His father was one of the daimyo, the landowners who controlled Japanese politics and society. He was not one of the major political forces in the country, though. He had to agree to give his son as a hostage, first to one clan and then to another, as proof of his loyalty to them. During this time, Ieyasu was educated by a Buddhist monk provided by his grandmother. From him he learned the finer points of military affairs and politics.

After the death of his father, Ieyasu returned home and took the leadership of his clan at the age of 13. Within two years, he proved his mettle at war. He led a successful attack on a fort and then defeated a force of soldiers that pursued him. During the course of his life, Ieyasu fought more than 45 battles. He won most of them and, in some of the most important, showed his skill by defeating armies much larger than his own.

While still in his teens, Ieyasu established a strong political network. He made an alliance with Nobunaga, who was moving to unite Japan under his power. When that leader was assassinated, Ieyasu made an alliance with his successor, Hideyoshi. The deal proved a significant one because Ieyasu gave up only traditional family lands. He won the right to establish his base in Edo, the area near modern Tokyo and home to the

richest farmland in the country. For the next few years, he patiently strengthened his hand.

First, Ieyasu settled himself and his followers in his new region. He built canals to drain the swamps in the area around Edo so he could build a fortress there. He lowered taxes and punished corrupt officials in order to win over the people. He also fortified his own position by marrying his daughters and granddaughters to neighboring lords. Meanwhile, Hideyoshi twice attempted to invade Korea, but Ieyasu avoided any involvement with those failures.

In 1598, just before Hideyoshi died, he won the promises of Ieyasu and four other major leaders to care for his young son until adulthood. However, Ieyasu ignored his promise and moved to seize power himself as soon as Hideyoshi passed away. In 1600, Ieyasu defeated his most powerful rival in a major battle and from then on had the allegiance of all the other daimyo. Three years later he was proclaimed shogun, the military ruler of a united Japan. Two years after that, he retired in favor of his own son. However, the boy simply handled the administrative details of ruling the nation. Ieyasu ran the country from behind the scenes.

During this time, Ieyasu implemented the same administrative system that he had tested earlier on his own lands. Late in his life, he took the final step to ensure a peaceful transfer of power. He masterminded the complete defeat of Hideyoshi's son, now in his twenties. With this last victory, Ieyasu secured the end of any rival claims to his family's power. Two years later, Tokugawa Ieyasu died.

Questions

- Making Inferences** How did Ieyasu show patience?
- Forming and Supporting Opinions** Did Ieyasu always act honorably? Give examples to support your answer.
- Drawing Conclusions** Why was it important for Ieyasu to remove any rival claims to the throne before he died? Explain.

CHAPTER
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Section 3

CONNECTIONS ACROSS TIME AND CULTURES

The Breakdown of Feudal Society

THEMATIC CONNECTION:
ECONOMICS

Many of the changes that took place in Japanese society under the Tokugawa Shogunate mirrored those that took place in medieval Europe. You read about these changes in Chapter 14. Compare the transformations of both societies by answering the questions that follow.

1. The Crusades contributed to the breakdown of Europe's feudal system. What brought about the end of the old feudal society in Japan? _____

2. In medieval Europe, better farming methods caused a spurt of population growth. How did changes in farming affect population growth in Tokugawa society? _____

3. In Europe, as trade and finance expanded, towns grew and flourished. What caused the growth of towns and cities in Japan? _____

4. As towns and cities grew, there was a revival of learning and culture. How did culture under the Tokugawa Shogunate compare with the culture of medieval Europe? _____

5. The development of towns in medieval Europe led to a change in the order of society. How did the social structure of Japan compare with that of medieval Europe? _____

6. The introduction of the longbow in the Hundred Years' War marked the end of chivalry and medieval warfare in Europe. What effect did contact with Europeans have on Japanese warfare? _____

7. In general, what factors do you think spark great changes in society such as those experienced in medieval Europe and in Japan under the Tokugawa shoguns? _____

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