PART ONE

Maritime East Asia in Historical Perspective

Chapter 1 provides a panoramic view to put the chapters in Parts Two to Four in a broader context. It surveys the development and sustainability of long-distance shipping trade in the East Asian Seas and the western part of the Asian Seas. The geographical unity of maritime East Asia is illustrated by the popular participation of its people and also viewed from the port-to-port as well as port-to-hinterland linkages. With the arrival of the western Europeans in Asian waters in the closing years of the fifteenth century, maritime trade in the Asian Seas entered into a global age.