

**Expanding the Cantonese Diaspora: Sojourners and Settlers in the West River Basin**  
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**ABSTRACT**

This article describes Cantonese migrants along the West River basin linking the two southern Chinese provinces of Guangxi and Guangdong during Ming (1368–1644) and Qing (1644–1911) times. Based primarily on genealogies of Pearl River delta lineages, the article examines a range of interconnected activities — including land settlement, commerce, and temporary sojourning in order to win civil service examination degrees — that Cantonese sojourners and settlers pursued outside the delta. These delta genealogies also prove to be valuable sources for the study of Cantonese overseas migration. In fact, many of the families discussed in this article sent sojourners both upriver along the West River basin and abroad to Vietnam and elsewhere in Southeast Asia. Thus, the author argues that the West River trajectory was an important component of the larger Cantonese diaspora.