This speaker examines the changing roles and positions of the three most prominent cities of the Pearl River Delta (PRD) in South China, namely, Canton, Hong Kong and Macau in the commercial networks and transportation system before the commencement of the 20th century. He identifies the roles of the three cities in different stages from late 16th century down to the end of the 19th century, with focus on the effects of the ascendance of different Western Powers to the domestic city networks of the Guangdong Province of China. By doing so, he evaluates their interactions in the 20th century and forecasts the future competitions and business cooperation among different port cities in the PRD.