

史上首位華籍扶輪社員 -- 唐元湛

Tong Yuen-Chan -- The First Chinese Rotarian in History

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Tong Yuen-Chan 唐元湛 (唐露園)

"I consider my membership in Rotary as the only Chinese representative one of the greatest honors that I have ever received, and I am truly grateful that I have the good fortune to be a member of an organization where such a spirit of good fellowship prevails. There is that atmosphere of push and jovial intimacy which cannot but make for the best in the movement for internationalism which is now fast growing in all countries.

In no other city in the world is there such a field for the international aims and ambitions of Rotary as in Shanghai, and no other country offers greater possibilities for the expression of the true Rotary spirit than China. China is standing on the threshold of internationalism, and looking out for the first time in her history for the better things of the other nations to be made a part of her own life. It is for this reason that I express the hope that more Chinese be brought into the circle of Rotary so that they may absorb that atmosphere of virile progressiveness which is expressed at each weekly meeting."

~~ Tong Yuen-Chan (唐元湛)

First in History Chinese Active Member of a Rotary Club

When Shanghai Rotary Club (上海扶輪社) was first organized in the Shanghai International Settlement (上海公共租界), China, in July 1919, the organizer -- Roger D. Pinneo -- Past President of Seattle Rotary Club, Washington, United States, felt that would be easier to kick-off by merely Americans to be the founding members. So, with the assistance of Thomas N.

Sammons, United States Consul-General in Shanghai, they drew from various classifications of the local United States citizens to be the charter members. The Shanghai Rotary Club was then admitted to the International Association of Rotary Clubs (forerunner of Rotary International) on 1 October 1919 with 37 charter members, all Americans, including Thomas Sammons.

However, early meetings of the Club had already laid down the future policy that “the Club membership should be multi-national”. Very soon, in the next couple of months, the first Chinese was invited and inducted Active Member of the Club: Tong Yuen-Chan (唐元湛) (*Classification: Chinese Chamber of Commerce*), who served Club Treasurer in the following Rotary Year.

Telecommunication Chief from the Imperial to the Republican China

Tong Yuen-Chan (*aka* Tong Lou-Yuen; Y. C. Tong) (1861-1921), Cantonese, was born in 1861 in Heung Shan County, Kwangtung Province (now: portion of Zhuhai City, Guangdong Province), Ch'ing Empire (大清國廣東省香山縣). After Tong graduated from the preparatory school in 1873, he was selected as one of the 30 students to continue studies in the United States of America, firstly in English language school at Greater Hartford, Connecticut. From 1878 to 1881, he studied successively at New Britain High School, New Britain, and the Columbia College, New York. While in the United States, he with Tsai Ting-Kan (蔡廷幹) (*later Admiral Tsai Ting-Kan, Charter President of Peking Rotary Club 1924*) was sent to work in the machine shops in Lowell, Massachusetts. Because of the danger of working amongst the moving machinery, both of the lads were given special permission to cut off their pigtails.

In 1881, Tong returned to Imperial Ch'ing and later finished studies on telegraphy in Tientsin (*Tianjin*) (天津). After graduation, he was devoted to telegraph administration for 32 years, during which period he held every office, from that of telegraph operator to director-general.

From 1905 to 1906, Tong served as Superintendent of Ch'ing Empire Telegraph Administration, and accompanied Duan Fang, Viceroy of Kiang Nan & Kiang Si (兩江總督端方), and Dai Hong-Ci, Deputy Finance Minister (戶部侍郎戴鴻慈), on a mission to the United States and European countries to study government systems. He was then made representative in Shanghai of the Imperial government, which brought him into intimate contact with the Americans and Europeans of the port---till the Xinhai Revolution (辛亥革命) in 1911 which resulted in the downfall of the Manchu Ch'ing Empire.

In 1908, Tong held posts as Chief Superintendent and Acting General Manager of the Imperial Ch'ing Telegraph Administration; Deputy to the Viceroy of Kiang Nan & Kiang Si; Commissioner of Inland Revenue; a director of the Canton Guild; a representative of the Kwangtung Province on the Chamber of Commerce; and Executive Director of Shanghai Commercial and Savings Bank (上海商業儲蓄銀行). In 1909, he was appointed by Office for Selection of Students for America (recipients of Boxer Indemnity Scholarships 庚子賠款獎學金) as its Commissioner at Shanghai.

Before the Xinhai Revolution in 1911, Tong served as the superintendent of the last term for Shanghai Telegraph Company, and held concurrent posts of controller at Imperial Ch'ing Posts and Telecommunications Administration; Supervisor at Shanghai Posts and Telecommunications Administration. After the Xinhai Revolution, he was appointed as the first term director-general at the Telegraph Administration of the Republic of China (中華民國). As one of the founders in the field of telegraph in China, Tong made great contributions to the modernization process during the late Imperial Ch'ing Dynasty and early Republican China. At the peak of his telegraph career, Tong experienced the Revolution in 1911 and the Second Republican Revolution, making him an important witness of changeable times.

On 21 July 1913, during the "Second Republican Revolution," the pro-Constitution party sent Tong to take over the Shanghai Telegraph Company from the control of the pro-Yuan Shi-Kai (袁世凱) party. But the foreign consulates deemed the act to be a violation of Treaty agreements; whereupon Tong was forced by the Shanghai Municipal Council (上海公共租界工部局) to relinquish his position.

Banker and Social Activist

Tong had been devoted to foreign affairs for quite a long period and had been engaged in a wide range of social activities, playing an important role in connecting the Chinese and Western cultures. His whole life presented the situations of the initial stage of modernization in China as well as the integration of Chinese and Western cultures. In foreign business circles, he was equally well-known, especially in connection with disputes between Chinese and foreigners in which was his frequent office to act as mediator, in most cases, with great success.

Tong held a strong sense of responsibility who spent a large proportion of his fortunes on public welfare, including education, opium ban, Red Cross, sports, fight for sovereignty, and so on. The Boy Scouts Federation of China (中華全國童子軍協會) was founded in 1913, in which Tong was a founder member and Vice-President. Also, he initiated Red Cross movement in China together with other returned students. He established a Red Cross hospital on Haig Road (海格路) (*today: Hua Shan Road 華山路*) in Shanghai after his retirement and was elected Chairman for The Red Cross Society of China in 1919. Furthermore, he founded over ten schools, including schools for deaf-mutes. He was the acting president for Fuh Tan (*Fudan*) University (復旦大學) in 1918, and one of the board members for Tong Ji University (同濟大學). Tong also served on numerous boards and committees, including American University Club, Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Harvard Medical School and various hospitals, World's Chinese Students' Federation, The International Institute of China (founded by Rev. Gilbert Reid), Chi-Sue Girls' School (啟秀女子中學), etc. Tong was honored as "Father of Students".

On November 1921 while Tong Yuen-Chan was at presiding the standing committee of the China Red Cross, he suffered a stroke. He died shortly after on November 9th at the Red Cross Hospital, Haig Avenue, Shanghai. He was 61 years old. There was a family service at home. A public funeral which was officiated by the China Red Cross, at Hongqiao Cemetery (虹橋公墓), on November 11th with thousands of community leaders and friends attending on a rainy day.

Tong was survived by his wife Deng Feng (鄧鳳), sons Kyat (唐觀翼), George (唐觀爵) and daughter Kum-Siu (唐金兆), grandsons Norman (唐耀良) and Bing-Liang (唐炳良).

《The ROTARIAN》magazine on its April 1922 Issue Page 205 released a piece of mourning message:

“Father of Students was Tong”

The members of the Rotary Club of Shanghai, China, are mourning the loss of a man who was loved by every Rotarian in the Club---Y. C. Tong. Rotarian Tong had the unusual distinction of being the first native Chinaman to become affiliated with Rotary. Sixty-one years of age, his life has been closely connected with the Chinese government and with business and industrial affairs. He was with the telegraph administration thirty-two years, during which period he held every office, from that of telegraph operator to director-general. At the time of his death, he was an officer of the American University Club, a director of the Chinese of Commerce, one of the leaders in the Canton Guild, as well as various other offices with civic organizations, and treasurer and a member of the board of directors of the Shanghai Rotary Club.

To the members of the Rotary Club he was known affectionately as “No.3”, being the third member on the charter membership list of the Club. In foreign business circles, Rotarian Tong was equally well known, especially in connection with disputes between Chinese and foreigners in which it was his frequent office to act as mediator, in most cases, with great success.

His greatest fame rested upon his service to Chinese students abroad for which service he was affectionately given the title of “Father of Students”. When a mere lad, he came to the United States to enter a university. Later, with other Chinese students in America, he was recalled by the Manchu Government and when he landed in China was sent to prison for a month because of his “foreign ways”. While in jail, he resolved that he would be a “father” to all students who would later seek education in America. True to his word, not a single Chinese student has since left for America without Tong supervising the arrangements. He was the fountain-head of information and the supreme advisor to both boy and girl students. He was rightly called “The Father of Western Students”.

Rotarian Tong’s life was truly one of service for his fellow men. His sixty-one years of activity were years of charity, of kindness, and of service.





1921 年 4 月，英文《扶輪》雜誌報道了唐元湛是第一個加入扶輪社的華人。
The membership of Y. C. Tong was reported on 《The ROTARIAN》 magazine April 1921.



全家福（由左至右）中座：唐元湛、鄧鳳伉儷；後排：女兒唐金兆、長子唐觀翼、媳婦麥鴻寶、次子唐觀爵；
 前排兩個孫子：唐耀良、唐炳良

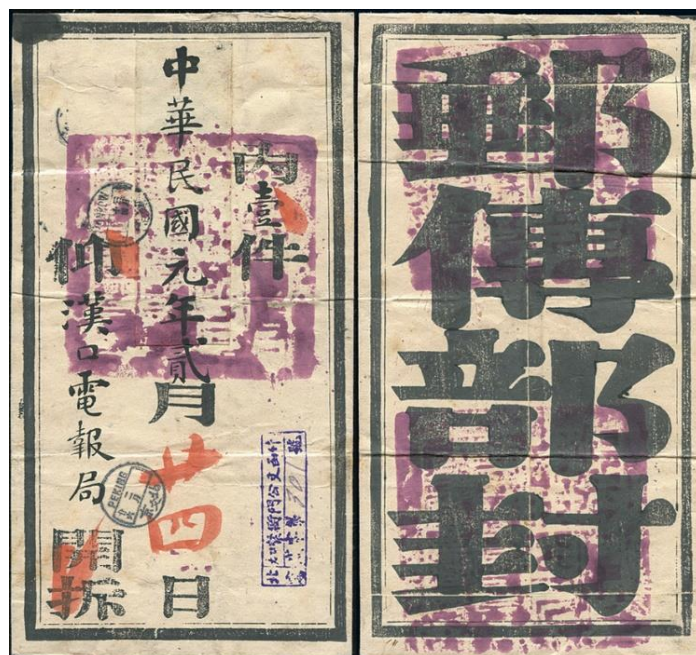
Family photo – Sitting: Mr. & Mrs. Y. C. Tong; Back row from left to right: daughter Kum Siu; eldest son Kyat; Kyat's wife; second son George; 2 grandchildren in front: Norman & Bing Liang



唐元湛和兩名兒子：(左)唐觀爵；(右)唐觀翼
Y. C. Tong and his sons George (left) and Kyat (Albert) (right)



唐元湛的私家車——一輛四號牌照的司蒂倍克
Y. C. Tong's private car---a Studebaker with license No. 4



1912年2月24日北京寄漢口電報局公文封，沿用清代郵傳部封套。
 4 February 1912 – A telegram cover of the Republican China's Peking Telegraph Bureau



1908 - 上海大北電報公司大樓（丹麥國際電報公司開設）（目前為泰國盤谷銀行上海分行使用）
 1908 - The Great Northern Telegraph Building (operated by Danish Great Northern Telegraph Company) on the Shanghai Bund (The building is used by the Bangkok Bank, Shanghai Branch.)

史上首位華籍扶輪社員 -- 唐元湛



大清國電報總局總辦 -- 唐元湛(唐露園)

Tong Yuen-Chan - Chief Superintendent, Imperial Ch'ing Telegraph Administration



1919-1921 年唐元湛參加上海扶輪社 (Shanghai Rotary Club) (職業分類：中華商會)，任司庫，是「扶輪世界歷史上首位華籍社員」。對於扶輪理想感情之深，他寫道：「余蒙拔擢，為扶輪社內華人之唯一代表，被以殊榮，深表感激。諸君彼此促進，親密無間，必能順應國際化之趨勢，最合世界史之新潮。然放眼世界，欲實現扶輪之志向，首推上海；考察各國，欲傳播扶輪之精神，必尊中國。蓋中國處於國際化之端口，且效法彼邦，風氣日濃，古未之有。如每週例會之所言，國人當循蹈乎此，入扶輪而進前方，為世界進文明。」

唐元湛，號露園 (1861-1921)，廣東人，1861 年出生於大清國廣東省香山縣唐家灣鎮唐家村（現今廣東省珠海市香洲區內）。1873 年，唐元湛在預備學校畢業，被選派為第二批三十名幼童之一赴美國留學。最初分派到康納狄格州哈特福德語文學校 (Greater Hartford School, Connecticut) 學習；1878-1881 年先後於新不列顛中學 (New Britain High School) 及哥倫比亞大學 (University of Columbia) 學習。在美國期間，他跟蔡廷幹 (日後成為海軍上將；1924 年北京扶輪社創社社長) 一同被派往馬薩諸塞州洛厄爾 (Lowell, Massachusetts) 一家機械工廠工作。因為走動於運轉著的機器車間，兩人獲特批剪掉了辮子。

從滿清到民國的中華電報事業奠基人

唐元湛於 1881 年回國，先在天津繼續完成了電報工程學業。畢業後開始長達 32 年的電報事業，從一名普通的電報員到電報局長。1905 至 1906 年期間，唐元湛任大清國電報局督辦。又聯同兩江總督端方、戶部侍郎戴鴻慈，被派往歐美考察政府體制；而後成為清廷在上海的代表，並得以同開放口岸的歐美國家人員密切接觸——直至 1911 年辛亥革命成功，推翻清朝統治。1908 年，唐元湛任大清國電報總局總辦及代理總經理、兩江總督代表、內陸地區厘金稅官員、廣州工會理事、商會廣東省代表、上海商業儲蓄銀行常務董事。

1909 年，兼任遊美學務處駐滬委員，為留美學生辦理出國前在上海的全部手續。

1911 年辛亥革命前夕，唐元湛成為清朝最後一任上海電報局總辦，兼任大清國郵電總局提調、上海郵電分局總辦。辛亥革命成功後，他又成為中華民國第一任電報總局局長。1913 年 2 月 4 日，任江蘇電政管理局電政監督兼上海電報局總辦（後改稱局長）。5 月 30 日任署理閩浙電政管理局監督。7 月 21 日，反袁二次革命期間，國民黨派唐元湛從北洋政府手中接管上海電報公司。但外國駐滬領事團卻認定這屬於侵犯條約的規定，因而上海公共租界工部局迫使唐元湛離開了上海電報局。唐元湛是中華電報事業的奠基人之一，當時的西方評價：「他們所獲得的知識使中國開展了現代通訊，並因此可以說電報系統擺脫了外國的政治干預。」在從事電報事業的巔峰時期，唐元湛經歷了「辛亥革命」和「反袁世凱二次革命」，見證了時代風雲。

銀行家、社會活動家

1913 年 8 月，唐元湛棄官從商，任上海商業儲蓄銀行副董事長，成為知名的銀行家。唐元湛長期從事洋務，並進行多種社會活動，一直擔當溝通中西文化的橋樑。通過唐元湛，呈現中國走向現代化最初時的狀態，以及中西文化在那個時期的融合。唐元湛在外事事務中也頗具名聲，尤其是在處理中外人員糾紛爭端之中，發揮有效的調解作用。

此外，強烈的社會責任感促使他將大多數財富用於公益事業，積極投入教育、禁煙、紅十字會、體育、爭奪主權等運動。1913 年中華全國童子軍協會成立，唐元湛是創始人之一，並擔任副會長。他還同其他留學生一起開展了中國紅十字運動。退休後，在上海海格路(Haig Avenue)（今華山路）辦了一所紅十字醫院，並於 1919 年被推選為中國紅十字會理事長。此外，他還創辦了十幾所學校，包括聾啞學校；1918 年任復旦大學代理校長；還是同濟大學校董之一，被譽為「學生導師」。

1921 年 11 月 7 日，中國紅十字會唐元湛理事長主持常議會，討論收回徐家匯總醫院事時，勞累過度的他「忽中風，頭痛不省人事」，9 日溘然長逝。11 月 11 日，總會總辦事處為唐元湛舉行葬禮於虹橋萬國公墓。是日大雨，中外人士送殯者數以千計，深為哀悼。

唐元湛留美歸來成為中國電報業先驅，以精湛技術服務社會。對「南北議和」順利達成，貢獻良多。為中國早期現代化，貢獻了自己的心智。領導紅十字會，鞠躬盡瘁。扶輪人唐元湛的一生，確實是為同胞服務的一生。他六十一年的人生，是慈善、仁愛和服務的歲月。



《唐元湛：萬家生佛，一代完人》

池子華（紅十字運動研究中心主任，蘇州大學社會學院教授、博士生導師）

2019 年 1 月 1 日

他是清朝末任上海電報局總辦，也是民國首任電報總局局長。這位「跨時代」的電報局長，就是與紅十字會結下深厚情緣的唐元湛。

「跨時代」的電報局長

唐元湛（1861-1921），號露園，廣東香山唐家村人（現屬珠海唐家灣鎮），「幼而敏慧，志趣高尚」，是第二批官費赴美留學幼童，那年他 12 歲。

1881 年，留美學生全部被召回，沒有完成學業的唐元湛不得不隨同回國。不過，留美經歷使血氣方剛的他雄心勃勃，決心幹一番事業。他被安排在電報局裡當一個電報生，月薪僅庫銀 4 兩，「衣食且不贍」，但他不以為苦，「耐著他的性子，施展他的大才，努力於他因小而大的職業」，逐漸得到重用，由學生而領班、而稽核、而總辦，被公認為中國電報業的開山鼻祖。

民國建立後，唐元湛順理成章出任首任電報局長。如果說「中國開展了現代通訊，並因此可以說電報系統擺脫了外國的政治干預」，毫無疑問，唐元湛功不可沒。

秉性仁慈，急於公益

1913 年是唐元湛人生道路上的轉捩點。在他看來，「於政界中討生活，不如於社會上辦公益」，於是退出政壇，全身心投入社會公益事業。因「他的秉性仁慈，急於公益，見義而勇為」，為中外人士所敬重。上海各大團體，幾乎都有他的蹤跡，不是職員就是董事，如留美大學俱樂部部長、上海商業儲蓄銀行董事、盲童學校校董等等，史書上說他「日孜孜以從事者有三十餘團體之多」，熱情之高，可以想見。而「上海各重要中外團體幾無不以列唐先生之名為榮」。在公益慈善領域，唐元湛就是一位「標杆」人物。其中，服務紅十字會「尤關重要」。

1912年9月29日，中國紅十字會第一次會員大會在上海召開。各地分會代表及有關方面人士1,352人出席，會議決定成立常議會作為議事決策機構，推舉唐元湛等34人為常議員。他由此成為名副其實的「紅十字人」。10月6日，常議員首次會議，公舉中華民國大總統、副總統為中國紅十字會名譽會長，呂海寰為會長、沈敦和為副會長兼常議會議長、江紹墀為理事長。

10月9日，唐元湛等34位常議員聯名公電政府，請明令宣佈正副會長。18日，袁世凱發佈大總統令：「派呂海寰充中國紅十字會正會長、沈敦和充中國紅十字會副會長。」中國紅十字會成功轉型，向規範化管理邁出關鍵一步，照唐元湛的話說，「組織本會常議會為議事機構，自是以後全國統一而總會自身之組織亦完全無缺矣」。

作為紅十字人，唐元湛不負初心，恪盡職守。而在1918年美國紅十字會在華徵求贊成員活動中，他一躍成為上海灘「熱搜」榜單之首。

1918年第一次世界大戰仍在進行之中，這場人道災難造成巨大生命財產損失。為了擴大救護範圍，提高救護效率，1918年初，美國紅十字會來到中國，發起贊成員（又稱贊助員）徵求活動，募集款項，製作繃帶，救護歐戰傷兵。

贊成員即捐款人，即為歐戰救護出力。這是一件好事，不料這一做法卻招致朝野上下一片反對聲，以為美國紅十字會在華設立分會，侵犯中國主權。5月3日，美國紅十字會在華代表、公使館商務參贊安樂爾（又譯為安立德）出面澄清，說美國紅十字會在華所設為辦事處而不是分會，沒有「侵犯許可權」之意。誤解消除，自5月中旬開始，徵求贊助員的活動在上海等各大中城市轟轟烈烈開展起來，規模浩大。

唐元湛就是這場活動的積極推動者和參與者，在他和同仁看來，「美國紅十字會在中國所辦善舉不少，如前歲皖省饑荒捐銀十五萬元，導淮工程十萬元，去歲天津水災二十五萬元，該會對於我國既若是之熱心，吾國亦不得不盡一分子之力，以助該會之進行。」唐元湛親自擔任第二徵求隊隊長，奔走呼籲，不遺餘力，成績顯著。

安樂爾以「唐露園、朱少屏二君最為出力」，特呈請美國總統威爾遜函謝。雖然美外交部以「請大總統親書函謝一層格於成例」無法照辦，但對「唐露園、朱少屏二君募款之成績，不勝欽佩之至，二君之熱心殊屬罕見，同人均應同深致謝。」

服務社會，盡瘁殞身

1919年8月12日，中國紅十字會常議會開會歡迎「駐滬副會長」蔡廷幹就職，新任理事長唐元湛也於同日正式走馬上任。蔡廷幹在京供職，不可能「駐滬」，總會總辦事處重擔落在了唐元湛的肩上。

作為實際上的「掌門人」，唐元湛對中國紅十字事業的發展不能不通盤擘畫，為此他專門撰寫發表了《中國紅十字會之過去及未來》的文章，提出「擴充常議員名額延聘各界通人充任以資眾擎也」「舉辦學生部會員以謀普及也」「廣募政軍兩界會員並呈請政府通令全國以資提倡也」等一攬子改革方案，得到蔡廷幹副會長「力挺」而得以實施，成為「蔡廷幹改革」的核心內容。

民國時期，戰火燎原，災難不斷，唐元湛理事長「在上海總辦事處籌措振災，創舉救疫，心力交瘁」，疲於奔命。1921年11月7日，常議會開會討論收回徐家匯總醫院事時，勞累過度的他「忽中風，頭痛不省人事」，9日溘然長逝。

當日，常議會特開緊急會議，推舉上海銀行行長莊籙（得之）繼任理事長，併發電報告汪大燮會長雲：「唐理事長虞日正在會所辦公，忽得中風急症，今早出缺，特開臨時緊急常議會，循例公舉莊得之先生擔任，已於今日接辦。一切照舊，藉維善舉，特此敬聞。」

11月11日，總會總辦事處為唐元湛舉行葬禮。是日大雨，「中外人士送葬者數以千計」，「冒雨臨穴（萬國公墓），深為哀悼」。紅會史書贊曰：「服務社會，盡瘁殞身，萬家生佛，一代完人。」



唐夫人鄧鳳女士

節錄自

《辛亥革命喚醒婦女解放意識——從當年廣東香山的幾位女性說起》

鄧潔（2021年10月-19）

辛亥革命是一場結束封建帝制、共建共和的革命。在這場革命中，一些城市的婦女以行動的主動性、積極性同處國民之列，籌募捐款、支援革命，形成了廣泛的社會影響，體現了中國婦女的覺醒，是婦女解放的先行者。

據當時的報章記載：1911年12月，上海著名官紳、商人伍廷芳、吳畹九、沈縵雲、唐露園等人的夫人，女活動家唐金鈴、單厘以及一些女校師生等在務本女塾內發起成立女界協贊會，以協助軍餉為宗旨，集合女同志，分任勸募，以表達女界對辛亥革命的支持。女界協贊會一方面通過學堂、報社大力宣傳募集捐款的重要性；另一方面又在杭州、松江、常熟、嘉興、無錫、蘇州、嘉定、常州等地設立分會，派遣會員到各地勸募。僅上海總會一處，就募得捐款五千元，繳存滬軍都督府，指定這批捐款專為北伐軍購置軍械用，後又募得捐款一萬元。婦女們積極支援革命的行為，受到孫中山的嘉獎。

毫無疑問，當時的作者依然有夫權思想，除了「女活動家唐金鈴、單厘」及後面的張昭漢、程穎用其姓名外，前面幾位都是以某人的「夫人」來冠名。筆者與唐元湛夫人有親緣關係，知道她的名字叫鄧鳳，1867年出生於廣東香山上柵村，是留美幼童鄧桂廷的胞妹，結婚後在名字前冠以夫姓，為「唐鄧鳳」。而這位唐金鈴，正是廣東香山唐家村著名的民族企業家唐廷桂的孫女、留美幼童唐榮俊的二女兒。上文中提到的「女界協贊會」又名「女子協贊會」，是著名女社會活

動家唐金玲於宣統三年十月初八（1911 年 11 月 28 日）在上海成立的，以協助軍餉為宗旨，為民軍募餉，並推舉伍廷芳夫人何妙齡、唐元湛夫人唐鄧鳳為正、副會長。

再看唐元湛夫人鄧鳳的家庭環境。1881 年，唐元湛從美國留學回國分配到上海電報局工作，回家鄉到上柵村鄧家提親，不再沿襲傳統習慣：完婚後把新媳婦留在家裡侍奉公婆、自己出去繼續闖蕩，而是選擇直接把新娘子迎娶到上海。鄧鳳扔掉裹腳布在娘家人的陪伴下乘帆船到香港，再上火輪船，抵達上海。結婚後雖然將夫姓「唐」放在了自己娘家姓氏前面，稱之為「唐鄧鳳」，但沒有稱她為「唐鄧氏」。

正是這樣的文化氛圍，粵商香幫的生意做得風生水起，作為中國最早接觸西方文化的實業集團，在以商戰進行「富國」實踐的同時，在文化建設上也盡著自己的力量。在上海廣肇會館的旗下，他們辦義學，讓自己的子弟包括女孩子在正規學堂裡接受東西方文化的融合教育，而出生在上海的唐金玲從小就受到了這樣的教育。同時，唐元湛、唐榮俊還盡其所能進行社會辦學，所創辦的學校有女子學校、聾啞學校，也有中外合辦的工藝學院。

唐鄧鳳不但放開了腳，還踏出了堅實的步伐。1897 年的《時務報》登載她給上海不纏足會捐款 20 元錢的消息，而《時務報》主編就是著名的維新派人士梁啟超。由區諤良和康有為首創的不纏足會在上海發展為「天足會」，得到了維新人士和社會名流的支援，隨後又發展到天津、成都等城市，遍及全國，天足會的董事都由上海的名流擔任。

庚子事變後，清政府實行新政，勸誡漢族婦女裹腳的詔諭指出：「漢人婦女，率多纏足，由來已久，有傷造物之和」。而唐鄧鳳向不纏足會捐款，希望更多的女同胞拒絕裹腳，其行為比清政府的新政還要早幾年。

「天足會」成為清政府實行新政的前奏，看起來有些風馬牛不相及，但在精神上是相通的，因為所有的變革都是從心靈的解放、觀念的轉變開始，拯救自己被毀壞了的肢體成為婦女解放的第一個行動。

光緒三十三年九月初二（1907 年 10 月 8 日），時任美國總統羅斯福的特使、美國陸軍部部長達夫提攜夫人到上海訪問。唐元湛代表兩江總督端方接待並會談，其中一項活動內容是上海官紳在靜安寺路的愚園內對達夫提等美國客人表示歡迎。為突出中國文明進步、經濟實力增強的新形象，二三十名天足會的女學生作為工作人員首次出現在公眾視野中，她們衣著得體，表情自然，因為上學讀書而塑造出來的知識型的美麗，讓所有人眼前一亮。

接受廣東香山文化薰陶的知識份子挑戰舊道德的先鋒，也是近現代最早的一批受過西式教育的新式知識份子。因為在婚姻上的自主，在一些中外人士舉行的社交活動中，他們也是偕同夫人前往，合影時還將女士尊為前排，這無疑讓何妙齡、唐鄧鳳有了接觸外面世界、瞭解時事的機會，自信、自主的意識也在增強。庚子事變後，新式知識份子逐漸走上歷史舞臺，他們的家眷受其影響，關注社會變革。
