

I got a fearful shock. BEXELL and BÖKENKAMP were the last members of the great expedition who were still in the field. We knew that they were on their way back from Suchow, but we had had no news of them for a long time. And now I imagined that BEXELL had been killed in an encounter with bandits.

GEORG told us what had happened. Knowing that we were to arrive on the morning of Sunday, October 22nd, and that trains were often late, he wanted to go to the station to find out at what time ours would be in. The Mongol driver DONGORA and the sheep-dog Bao were to accompany him in our small car. DONGORA was depressed and gloomy, for he had dreamt in the night that he and GEORG were driving at full speed towards a broken-down bridge over an abyss; and now he had a premonition that some catastrophe awaited him.

GEORG seated himself at the wheel, with DONGORA on his left and the dog Bao in the back seat.

They were driving along the street leading to the station. Just where this street runs out into open country it is intersected at right-angles by a seldom-used railway track, only 2 meters from the last houses. No traffic constable stood at the end of the street to give a warning, though the last house to the right obscures the view in that direction. GEORG, therefore, did not notice an engine coming along the track, tender first. Both car and locomotive were going at too great a speed to be able to use their brakes. DONGORA uttered a despairing cry of »Burkhan mini!» (»My God!«), flung open the left door and jumped out, followed by Bao.

There was a terrific crash! The tender's coupling was driven into the side of the car, and the locomotive pushed the crushed vehicle along before it. The left wheels were forced diagonally across the sleepers, but the coupling prevented the car from swinging round. GEORG would have been crushed to pulp, if guardian angels had not been protecting him. He sat as in a vice, between seat, wheel, lever and forced-in door, quite unable to move. Meanwhile, the crushed car was thrust twenty-five meters over the sleepers before the locomotive stopped.

Tender and bruised, GEORG managed to worm himself out of the wreckage. To his own astonishment he found that he could walk and stand. He called to DONGORA, but received no answer. The poor fellow was found 13 meters from the point where the collision had taken place, fearfully mutilated and with his forehead crushed. Evidently he had been unable to get clear, and had fallen under the car.

The doctor from the Catholic Mission, who was summoned immediately, was only able to certify that DONGORA's death had been instantaneous. The police wanted to arrest the engine-driver; but when GEORG explained that he was equally to blame, the law took no steps.

We visited the scene of the disaster, where our splendid driver lay covered with blood under a bast mat. The dead man was later laid in a coffin which was placed in a temple. His relatives demanded compensation and we supported their