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Dog in Far East Braves Flood to Guard Family's House

By The Moscow Times

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When a flood of Biblical proportions hits your house, your beehives float away and your sheep are decimated by disease, who is left to rely on? For a family in the far eastern village of Vladimirovka, it was Druzhok the guard dog, who showed heartwarming devotion to his owners by guarding their abandoned house all night.

Four-year-old Druzhok, whose name means "little friend," was one of the few possessions the Andreyev family managed to take with them when the Amur River flooded their house in the eponymous far eastern region around 4 a.m. last week, destroying most of their home, local newspaper Amurskaya Pravda reported Saturday.

The family found shelter with friends in an apartment building not far from the village — but the dog, a large mongrel who is part Central Asian Shepherd, vanished on the third night.

The worried Andreyevs eventually found their vigilant dog on the flooded front porch, neck-

deep in water and barking at rescuers passing by.

The dog, who spent nights swimming around outdoors, must have smelled someone approaching the house and decided to take action, its owner, Yelena Andreyeva, was quoted as saying.

"It was deep. He could not walk, only swim. He stood on the front porch and spent all night there," Andreyeva said. "We entered the yard, he was standing there shivering but not leaving. Boy, was he glad to see us!"

Druzhok, who was found unharmed, was evacuated to the nearby city of Blagoveshchensk along with the Andreyevs and put in a cage so he wouldn't run away again, radio station Vesti FM reported.

Meanwhile, the report of his noble deed made Druzhok a star of the Russian blogosphere, gathering hundreds of thousands of "likes" on Yelena Andreyeva's Odnoklassniki social network page and earning him the nickname "Hachiko of the Amur," after a Japanese Akita dog who waited for his late owner for nine years, showing up daily for the train that was supposed to bring him home.

The ongoing flooding in Russia's Far East has affected about 150 residential areas. Some 23,000 people have been evacuated and thousands more may need to leave their homes.

Many other dogs in the Amur region have reportedly remained standing guard at flooded houses, but it was the blog coverage that made Druzhok famous, newspaper Komsomolskaya Pravda wrote.

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