

Loki: A Life of Courage

by Ted Paull

Loki's owner Ted Paull, sent this, along with [an introductory email](#), to the Gompa Lhasa Apso Preservation Program shortly after Loki's death at 17 years.

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October 17, 1990 - August 7, 2007

On August 7th, at approximately 6 a.m., Loki, our beloved little Lhasa Apso, passed away peacefully in her sleep. Burdened with congenital heart murmur all her life, her heart finally gave out just a few months before her 17th birthday.

Loki was a sweet little dog with a very large personality and a presence that was apparent to anyone who knew her. From the moment we first met Loki, her 'take-charge' spirit was obvious. Loki was the tiniest but the most active and curious of a litter of 3 Lhasa Apsos, and as we watched her playing in the kitchen at the breeder's home she immediately 'adopted' us, and then kept presenting to us her brother Tashi, a beautiful blond Lhasa puppy. Because of their obvious attachment to each other we realized we couldn't separate them, and decided to take them both. Loki always showed concern and protection for her larger but shyer brother. He followed her direction in most situations, and they were inseparable companions until Tashi's death five years ago, at age 12.

Shortly after Tashi's passing, when the zany terrier puppies entered our household, Loki quickly and rightfully established the 'pecking order' to be followed. Although the terriers were twice her size and weight, and far more active, she kept them in line with a sharp bark, and a judiciously applied nip or two, as necessary, until the appropriate level of respect was established. The boys learned very quickly who ruled the roost! Loki also earned the respect of most people who met her.

Loki was a very independent minded dog, with definite opinions of her own. In order to get Loki to do something, you had to tactfully find a way to make it 'her idea'. She had a strong ego and an iron will. When she no longer wanted to walk on leash, she stopped cold, dug in her heels, and her 12 pound body transformed into a 50 pound anchor. Loki had the ability to communicate her needs with crystal clarity, far more directly than most humans. Loki usually got whatever she wanted! It was not in her character to slobber up to you, trying to win your affection, as some dogs do. She was content to hang around with the family, unobtrusively, always aware of what was going on in the room. On those occasions that Loki chose to come close and cuddle, you truly felt honoured. To have Loki, warm and with silky soft fur, nestled in bedside you 'tete a tete' was a peak experience in our household.

Loki was a brave and stalwart soul. Although plagued with medical problems all of her life she rarely complained and she adapted well to whatever life threw at her. From a very early age her hind legs would buckle when she ran very fast, chasing Tashi as she loved to do. She faced a surgery in which the problem was repaired by rebuilding her crucius tendons. Fortunately the surgery worked and her legs worked again, good as new.

Just a few years earlier Loki had also developed glaucoma, first in one eye and later in a second. She underwent an uncomfortable series of laser and cryo surgeries and lengthy hospital stays, with poor results. One eye was lost completely, and what remaining eyesight she had was soon obscured by a cataract, which rendered her effectively blind for the past 10 years or so. Nevertheless, despite this loss of her precious sight, after an initial period of painful head and face banging, Loki (the 'pinball wizard') learned to adapt to her new situation, using her DPS ('doggie positioning system') to map out her surroundings. She soon learned to navigate her way in and around the Silver Bark home, and was able to find her food, water, sleeping quarters, doggie doors, go up and down stairs, and travel freely in the outdoor environment. When we moved from Ottawa to the Thousand Islands, even at age 14 she re-learned her way around the new home and property. The first few months of unpacking and getting settled in were pretty rough on her (and us), and she grumbled occasionally (as we all did), but with determination and patience she finally figured her way around her new digs. We did our part by keeping unexpected obstacles out of her well travelled paths.

As with all of our dogs, Loki was an excellent and avid traveller. She accompanied us everywhere, enjoying immensely the new experiences, smells and tastes to be had while 'on the road'. She never lost her curiosity and love of travel. Even after she lost her eyesight, she loved to investigate new places, preferring, uncharacteristically, to be 'on leash', as it made her more secure, so that she could run at a fast clip in open spaces, knowing she was being protected. In her latter days, since she slept much of the time, we began to leave her at home when we left the house, taking the terriers with us. She quickly let us know that she was not happy with this situation, clearly signalling her displeasure using the 'wet sock' strategy, i.e. leaving a scientifically calculated and situated puddle in the precise place that you could not help but step in it on when returning home. So, back on the road she went, and wet socks stopped happening. For the past several years she has enjoyed coming to agility trials where she was part of the 'cheering section', telling her story to every passer-by in the vicinity, dog and human, in her tiny little voice, her tail straight up in the air, happy as can be. Then she'd settle down and enjoy the ambience and treats that inevitably appeared in front of her nose.

When Loki's heart bothered her she would cough in a certain way to let us know. When she 'called for a taxi', we would help her up the stairs, give her water, treats or some comfort until she felt better. During the past few days the coughing became quite persistent, signalling her growing discomfort, and finally early Tuesday morning her heart gave out and she slipped away from us.

One last story about Loki needs to be told. Loki and her brother Tashi were born in humble surroundings on a breeding farm near Ottawa. But, in reality, they came from a very noble lineage, directly descended from the dogs in the Drepung Monastery in Tibet. Hardy and well adapted to extremes of climate and altitude, they served as sentinels within Tibetan monasteries and homes, resulting in a temperament that is alert, independent, and discriminating toward strangers. They were also, of course, loving companions to the monks.

During the violent overthrow of Tibet by the Chinese, in 1959, the majority of monasteries were destroyed and countless monks murdered, in an attempt by the Chinese to erase the religion and culture of Tibet. The Lhasa Apsos who lived in the monasteries were not spared. They were also murdered because of their distinctive nature and importance in Tibetan society. Many people fled from Tibet to India and Nepal. Only a very few Lhasa Apsos were carried over on the lengthy and dangerous journey to freedom. Loki and Tashi were direct descendants of these rare dogs, now known as the Gompa Lhasa Apsos (Gompa is the meditation hall in a monastery) who were smuggled out over the Himalayan mountains by fleeing Tibetan monks, and of which several breeding pairs were brought to Canada in the early 1980's. Now, many years later, there is a growing recognition of the importance of preserving this highly intelligent breed of dog, who stand as a legacy from Tibet, speaking for their ancestors from a country whose monasteries have been destroyed and whose tradition of shaggy little dogs running to sound alarm or settling peacefully beside the monks for companionship has disappeared - lost forever.

Tibetans believe that certain aspects of mind and consciousness are not lost at death but re-incarnate into another form. One Tibetan Lama said: *"We believe that these Apsos must be very good, because these dogs have maximum chance of taking rebirth as a human next life. When a human dies, before he humanly rebirths, he may enter the life of these Apsos. Not only Lamas, common people also, depending on their previous life can reincarnate in these Apsos."*

We can't say anything definite about Loki's spiritual origins or her future incarnations. But we do know that we were blessed to have had the gift of her energy, spirit and intelligence living with us in our household for 17 years. Although we are grateful that it was a lengthy time in Apso years, it was still a brief time in ours. But she lived a good and courageous life, and she brought joy into our house. We loved her for it. Her wonderful 'happy tailed' attitude and dignified presence will be sorely missed.

Tashi Delek, Loki. We wish you a very favourable re-incarnation, and may we meet you again on a higher plane of life's spiritual journey.

Teddy and Margaret

Further information on the efforts to preserve the Gompa Lhasa Apsos can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Here is a [fascinating interview](#) that explains the importance given by Tibetan monks to their Lhasa Apso companions. And, here is another [interview with Lama Gyen Yeshe](#).



Loki and Tashi



Tashi



Loki in costume



Loki relaxing



Tashi, Loki and Margaret



Loki and Ted

Ted sent more photos...



Loki and Tashi - November 1990



Curious Loki



Tashi - October 1990



Tashi and Loki - Best Friends



First Winter



Tashi and Loki

Ted also photos taken of his dogs' parents, Kiku and Ngosu, along with ...

"I found a bunch more early pix of Loki and Tashi, including several taken at Gerry D'Aoust's farm, of Ngosu and Kiku. Ngosu was

quite a big boy and very scruffy, while Kiku was quite tiny and very pretty. Tashi had her colouring, while Loki seems to have inherited the black and white pattern of earlier generations. I found the picture called dog1.jpg on the web in an article about Tibetan history. I thought this dog was Ying Yang but I'm not sure and I cannot find it again, but the colouring is so close to Loki's that I'm convinced it's one of her ancestors."



Kiku



Kiku



Gerry and scruffy Ngosu



Bedraggled Ngosu



This is, indeed, Ying Yang. He was Loki and Tashi's great grandfather.

The Power of the Dog
by
Rudyard Kipling

There is sorrow enough in the natural way
From men and women to fill our day;
And when we are certain of sorrow in store,
Why do we always arrange for more?
Brothers and sisters, I bid you beware
Of giving your heart to a dog to tear.

Buy a pup and your money will buy
Love unflinching that cannot lie--
Perfect passion and worship fed
By a kick in the ribs or a pat on the head.
Nevertheless it is hardly fair
To risk your heart to a dog to tear.

When the fourteen years which Nature permits
Are closing in asthma, or tumour, or fits,
And the vet's unspoken prescription runs
To lethal chambers or loaded guns,
Then you will find--it's your own affair--
But ... you've given your heart to a dog to tear.

When the body that lived at your single will,
With its whimper of welcome, is stilled (how still!)
When the spirit that answered your every mood
Is gone--wherever it goes--for good,
You will discover how much you care,
And will give your heart to a dog to tear.

We've sorrow enough in the natural way,
When it comes to burying Christian clay.
Our loves are not given, but only lent,
At compound interest of cent per cent.
Though it is not always the case, I believe,
That the longer we've kept 'em, the more do we grieve:
For, when debts are payable, right or wrong,
A short-term loan is as bad as a long--
So why in--Heaven (before we are there)
Should we give our hearts to a dog to tear?



Courageous Loki

PARENTS	GRAND-PARENTS	GREAT GRANDPARENTS	GREAT GREAT GRANDPARENTS	GGG GRANDPARENTS
Ngosu	Sindhu	Tashi		
		Dolma	Nyalu	Patu Dolma I
			Droma	Nyalu Dolma II
	Gulip	Nyalu	Patu	
			Dolma I	
		Droma	Nyalu	Patu Dolma I
			Dolma II	
Kiku	Ghazni	Ngosu	Sindhu	Tashi Dolma
			Gulip	Nyalu Droma
		Dolma	Nyalu	Patu Dolma I
			Droma	Nyalu Dolma II
	Yangsom	Ying-Yang	Nyalu	Patu Dolma I
			Droma	Nyalu Dolma II
		Droma	Nyalu	Patu Dolma I
			Dolma II	

I recently came upon your website as I conducted did a search for information about the lineage of two Lhasa Apsos that were part of our family. I first became acquainted with Lhasa Apsos in the Tibetan village of Upper Dharamsala, India (McCleod Ganj) where I lived for a period of time in 1973-74. After my return to Canada I maintained close contact with the Tibetan community in Canada, and later became involved in Tibetan cultural affairs.

In 1989, during the first visit to Ottawa by the Dalai Lama, my wife and I met Gerry D'Aoust during private audience with His Holiness, where he had come to present a pair of Lhasa Apsos puppies to His Holiness as a gift. My wife and I were quite taken with the exceptional beauty of these dogs, and sometime later, in the autumn of 1990, we purchased two beautiful Lhasa Apsos from Gerry.

Because of our association with Tibetans, we understood the significance of the lineage of our dogs, who we named Tashi (male) and Loki (female), and who were two beautiful little Gompa Lhasa Apsos. At the time that we purchased the dogs, Gerry was hopeful that we would eventually be able to have the dogs registered, but this never happened. A number of years ago I did send an email to the monastery where Gerry's dogs were first transferred, to try to get information from the registry, but received no response at that time. Although both dogs are now deceased, I would still like to have a record of their parentage as far back as the records show, at least to Gerry original breeding stock imported from Nepal and India. I am hoping that you are able to help me.

Loki was a white and black female, and Tashi was a beautiful red-tipped golden male. They were a sister and brother from the same litter, of 4 if I recall correctly. The father was Ngo-Su, but I do not recall the mother's name. This is part of the information that I am trying to find out, and I am therefore inquiring to see if your organization may have copies of the records which Gerry D'Aoust kept of his litters from that time. Or if not, would you know who has those records. I have also attempted to contact Gerry but have no received a reply as yet.

On a final note, Loki passed away this week, just a few months short of her 17th birthday. I have written a tribute (below) to this

precious little being who brought us great joy, along with her brother Tashi who left us 5 years ago, at the age of 12.

I have also attached a series of pictures of our dog that may be of interest to you, including one taken of the puppies at seven weeks old! You can see the resemblance of Loki's (black and white) facial coloring to some of the dogs shown in early photos taken in Tibet and Nepal.

Sincerely,

Ted Paull