

## AMERICA: GIANTS AND HUGE WILD AREAS

Siberian tigers were present in America, particularly in Alaska, 100 000 years ago, as established by Sandra Herrington (in : Anton and Turner. Big cats and their fossile relatives. 1997. Columbia University Press). They were probably also present during other interglacial eras of mid and upper pleistocene. They had a circum – arctic distribution (Liakhov Islands and probably more occidental areas of the same latitude, Yakoutia, Kamtchatka, oriental Beringia, and perhaps heart of Canada). They live besides dominant giant lions. These animals were biggest than their eurasian congeners, themselves bigger than african lions. Big males of american lions could exceed half a tonne and are considered by zoologists as the biggest felines of all times.

Moreover, Sandra Herrington established that, on the whole distribution era of american lion (from Alaska to Peru), some fossil bones previously interpreted as belonging to these lions were in some cases, those of giant jaguars, and in others, those of siberian tigers. Furthermore, hybridation between a male lion and a tigress products a giant hybrid, the liger (sometimes exceeding half a tonne, biggest present felines).

Hybridation of a giant male american lion and a siberian tigress could (seldom of course) occur in prehistoric oriental Beringia.

The male cub of this breeding (« pleistocene liger ») could have become the hugest feline morph of all times, with a volume comparable to this of a polar bear or a Kodiak brown bear. At the end of upper Pleistocene, siberian hunters reached Alaska via the Beringia bridge. They colonized the majority of american continent during the 1000 following years. They were carriers of a powerful culture, with the tiger as key axis, and with an enormous influence on northern China (at least to the Yellow River), on Korea and Japan. This culture determined major elements of prehispanic american culture, with the jaguar as substitute of the tiger.

Jaguar is, like Tiger, the god of the mountain, the guard of the forest, a subterranean and aquatic divinity. Jaguars in cardinal points have the same 4 symbolic colours as tigers in China. They defend the maya village as tigers defend Chinese Empire . Strong similarities (that are probably homologies) can be found between the olmec were jaguar and the Tiger King of Shang Dynasty, the meso – american feline mask and the chinese Taotie. Moreover, the dragon (even more important than tiger in Chinese Civilization) is a chimera, a concentrated summar of biological richness and complexity. The fledged serpent (even more important than the jaguar) has the same characteristics.

Present America is the hybridization of european culture of last centuries with this segment of sino – siberian civilization present in America since more than 10 000 years. Today, more than 10 000 tigers (and probably more, as breeding is free in the facts) live in USA, in hundreds of parks, many of them being also breeding centers, as well as with private persons. Texas counts 1 tiger for 2000 inhabitants (the highest ratio in the world). USA have also more than 200 ligers (both male and female, the second being fertile). It is now clearly established that tigers can easily live in various ecosystems and have real feralisation capacities. So, USA can save tiger species in the wild and offer to these animals

sanctuaries on their own territory (of course depending of ecological realities like bears and wolfs presence level).

They can also product tigers for the export in their breeding centers, in destination of european arctic, Patagonia and other areas on other continents.

They have all means for an autonomous and successfull realization in this domain.

Moreover, in the mid – term, perhaps it will be possible to resolve the problem of fertility in male ligers, and so obtain, by hibridization of one of these animals with a siberian tigress, a big creature comparable to the « pleistocene ».