

CATHAY

Warmaster Revolution developmental list

By the 'Oriental Design Team' (2009) amended by the Warmaster Rules Committee (2021)

Background

Located far to the east of the Old World, the Grand Empire of Cathay is populous, wealthy, and technologically advanced in comparison to many of its neighbours. The imperial cities, and some of its borders, are protected by very thick walls and its armies have, for many centuries, used the secret of gunpowder to good effect. The empire has also been successful in recruiting border tribes as mercenaries; turning potential invaders' strength – especially in cavalry – against them. Robust administrative structures exist in all provinces and a combination of conscription and the hiring of mercenaries provides Cathay with large, infantry-based armies. Invasions are frequent, but the highly-disciplined imperial forces have always prevailed by wearing down their enemies and then eventually overwhelming them with reinforcements from other areas.

Crossbows. Although the use of handguns is increasing, in many provinces and especially within city garrisons, the older and more reliable Crossbows are still used. And, in the borderlands, some commanders employ Hobgoblin Bowmen

Bannermen. The core of Cathay's armies are their large numbers of infantry units armed with swords, spears, or other polearms. Well-drilled and deployed in combined formations with other infantry and artillery, they are a reliable anchor-point. In a handful of provinces, units of Orc mercenaries are also deployed but they are somewhat less enthusiastic in battle than their free, marauding kin in the west.

Terracotta Warriors. At moments of the empire's greatest peril, these automatons are summoned from their underground resting places by Cathay's Sorcerers. Once again fighting for their emperor, these Undead Warriors provide a silent and stoic bulwark against which even the forces of Chaos have broken.

Handguns. Primitive but effective, these short-range gunpowder weapons are widely proliferated. They are usually integrated within the ranks of other infantry units.

Ironguts. For many generations the empire has employed Ogres as mercenaries. Conditioned by long service and regular meals, they are both disciplined and heavily-armoured.

Dishonoured. Those who have stained the family honour and seek one last opportunity to redeem themselves and their family. Totally fearless, they hurl themselves into battle in pursuit of a glorious death.

Chariots, Cavalry & Light Cavalry. The army's elite troops travel to war in sturdy chariots, supported by units mounted on horses, Qilin, or even smaller Fu-dogs. Reconnaissance and harassment of the enemy is carried out by imperial scouts, tribal cavalry, and Hobgoblin Wolf Riders.

Rocket Launchers & Triple-Bows. Although some cities are defended by large, and not very mobile, cannons, Cathay's field armies normally deploy with a mixture of gunpowder artillery devices and, especially useful in wet weather, large bolt throwers.

General & Heroes. An experienced military elite, with fierce loyalty to the emperor, provides a reliable leadership cadre and their tactics are strongly influenced by the teachings of the empire's many Sages.

Sorcerers. Cathay generals are usually accompanied by Sorcerers, who provide them with wise counsel and protective spells.

Celestial Dragon. Cathay's ancient dragons sometimes employ their considerable powers in support of the emperor on the battlefield. When they do, Cathay's soldiers are sensible enough to obey their commands.

Chariot. As members of the governing elite, Generals, Heroes, and Sorcerers often travel to war in high-status chariots.

Tiger. Young and adventurous military leaders sometimes capture and train tigers as fast-moving and ferocious steeds.

Qilin. These single-horned, horse-like creatures are blessed with mystical powers. Occasionally, Sorcerers are able to tame them and channel their magical energy. But not all Sorcerers have the subtlety and patience required.

Cathay Army Selector

Troop	Type	Att	Range	Hits	AS	Cmd	Size	Pts	Min/Max	Special
Crossbows	Inf	2/1	30	3	-	-	3	40	1/-	-
Bannermen	Inf	3	-	3	6+	-	3	45	2/-	1
Handguns	Inf	-/1	15	-	-	-	-	+25	-/-	2
Ironguts	Inf	4	-	4	4+	-	3	140	-/1	
Dishonoured	Inf	5	-	3	-	-	3	70	-/1	3
Chariots	Cha	3/1	-	3	5+	-	3	110	-/1	
Cavalry	Cav	3	-	3	5+	-	3	90	-/2	
Light Cavalry	Cav	2/1	15	3	6+	-	3	60	-/3	4
Rocket Launcher	Art	1/1D6	60	2	-	-	1	55	-/1	5
Triple Bows	Art	1-2*	40	2	-	-	2	65	-/1	6
General	Gen	+2	-	-	-	9	-	125	1	
Hero	Hero	+1	-	-	-	8	-	80	-/2	
Sorcerer	Wiz	0	-	-	-	7	-	45	-/1	
Celestial Dragon	Mnt	+3	-	-	-	+1	-	100	-/1*	7
Chariot	Mnt	+1	-	-	-	-	-	+10	-/1	
Tiger	Mnt	+2	-	-	-	-	-	+20	-/1	8
Qilin	Mnt	+1	-	-	-	-	-	+15	-/1	9

Army Rule

Structure & Discipline: To reflect their empire's high-quality military organisation and command arrangements, Cathay commanders may issue orders to brigades of up to 6 units instead of the usual 4. However, this does not apply to brigades containing chariots or cavalry.

Special Rules

1. Terracotta Warriors. At no points cost, any or all of the army's Bannermen units can be designated as Terracotta Warriors. They deploy normally with the rest of the army, but can only form brigades with themselves. Also, they can only give/receive support to/from each other and can only be ordered by Sorcerers, who gain +1 command when doing so. They cannot act on initiative, are unaffected by terror or enemy within 20cm, and cannot be confused.

2. Handguns. Any or all of the army's Bannermen units can be upgraded to include Handguns within their ranks. Their range is only 15cm, but the projectiles can pierce armour far easier than an arrow or a crossbow bolt. Therefore, count enemy armour values as one worse (minus 1) than normal.

3. Dishonoured. Will always use initiative to charge an enemy if possible and cannot be given orders instead. They never use their initiative to evade. They cannot be driven back by shooting and do not roll for drive backs. If a unit is victorious in combat and is able to pursue the enemy or advance, then it must do so. They are unaffected by enemies that cause terror in combat, so they do not suffer the usual minus 1 attack modifier.

4. Light Cavalry. Their shooting range is restricted to 15cm, but Light Cavalry can shoot behind or to the side as well as to the front. They can therefore shoot at enemy charging them from any direction.

5. Rocket Launcher. The Rocket Launcher is treated as a Stone Thrower as described in the main rulebook, except it shoots 1D6 times per phase and any hits inflicted have an armour save with a minus 1 modifier (as for handguns). If the roll for the number of shots comes up a 1, the Rocket Launcher has misfired and you must roll another D6 against this table:

1	2	3	4	5	6
Rocket Launcher explodes and is removed from play.	Rocket Launcher explodes and is removed from play and the target suffers 2 +1D6 attacks.	Rocket only does one attack. Due a malfunction only lighter rockets can be used till the end of the game, with only 1D3 attacks instead of 1D6.	Rocket only does one attack.	Rocket overshoots and does 1D6 attacks on the first unit past the original target, regardless of range. If no target is behind, the rocket leaves the table without causing damage.	Rocket does 2D6 attacks instead of the normal 1D6.

6. Triple Bows. Triple Bows are Bolt Throwers as described in the main rulebook.

7. Celestial Dragon. One Sorcerer per army can be upgraded to become a dragon which flies, gives orders, casts spells, and causes terror. The dragon cannot give orders to Terracotta Warriors.

8. Tiger. Only heroes can ride Tigers.

9. Qilin. Only a Sorcerer can ride a Qilin. Once per battle the Qilin's magical power adds +1 to the dice roll when casting a spell. The player must announce that they are using the Qilin's magic before rolling to see if the spell works.

Cathay Spells

1. GLORY OF CATHAY (4+ to cast) 30cm

This spell can be cast upon a friendly unit of unengaged missile-armed infantry or chariots within range. The Sorcerer does not need to be able to see the friendly unit nor their intended target. When the spell is cast on a unit, it can shoot twice that turn instead of once. If it has already shot that turn it can therefore shoot again immediately. If it has yet to shoot it can shoot twice. When a unit shoots twice due to Glory of Cathay the second shot is always at a minus 1 penalty and will therefore hit on a 5+.

2. LION DOGS ATTACK (4+ to cast) 30cm

This spell can be cast on any enemy unit within range regardless of whether the Sorcerer can see it or not. The spell takes affect until the end of the opposing player's next turn. Whilst the spell lasts the unit cannot charge and if engaged in combat will not pursue or advance. Even units that are otherwise obliged to charge, pursue, or advance will not do so if affected by this spell.

3. FEROCITY OF TIGERS (5+ to cast) 30cm

This spell can be cast on a friendly unit engaged in combat. The spell can be cast regardless of whether the Sorcerer can see the target or not. The spell lasts for the duration of the following combat phase. Every stand in the unit adds +1 to its attacks value. Also unit becomes immune to terror.

4. TRANQUILITY OF HEAVEN (5+ to cast) 15cm

All friendly units within 15cm of Sorcerer count as immune to terror for the following combat phase.

Designers' notes

Having brought Samurai to the play testing stage, the rules committee felt that the same should be done for Cathay. Our primary assumption was that the 2009 list in the Trial Armies book provided a fairly solid start-point, but we also tracked back and looked the 2006 Qin China list for Warmaster Ancients. Additionally, we received some very helpful suggestions from the Warmaster community, especially with regard to Warhammer interpretations of Cathay. Our decisions were also informed by some of us having played a fair number of games with the old list over the last decade. Some initial playtesting between lockdowns in 2020 allowed additional refinements.

In amending the list, we have tried to strike a balance between keeping the core elements of the old list and adapting it to reflect developments in the Warhammer lore. We are also conscious that important shifts – especially the infantry/cavalry balance – have occurred through Warmaster Revolution. We have therefore retained the strong emphasis upon infantry within the army, but have enhanced the cavalry choices, albeit with tightly restricted numbers. We also felt that some of the infantry and artillery min/maxs were out-of-kilter with analogous entries in other lists, so have refined them too.

We treated the Crossbows like Albion Slingers and then, to provide a substantive gunpowder option, we made Handguns a whole-unit upgrade. This seemed a better option than adding a skirmish stand or another shooting unit type. Overall, we wanted the army to be distinctive rather than a minor variant of the 'Old World Empire'. However, if players want to use their Cathay models with cannons as an option, they can always proxy using the existing Empire list.

The Army Rule is unique and was devised after other alternatives had been considered and discarded. The Warhammer Cathay lore paints a picture of empire's military success built upon large, disciplined infantry armies. These provide solid defensive blocks and the empire's strong administrative structures allow them to regenerate their forces so that while they might lose battles, they will win wars in the long-run. Instead of using a single-character device, like the Sage in the old list or buffing the General up to Command 10, we settled upon a simple tweak to one of the core game mechanics. And this has some precedent in another infantry army (Skaven). But applying it to chariots and cavalry was felt to be too powerful.

The Terracotta Warriors were the subject of some debate. We really liked this suggestion, which had come from outside the committee, but struggled to operationalise it without overpowering the army. Cherry picking the Raise Dead spell from the Undead armies was quickly discarded. We toyed with other 'summoning' options but they were also very powerful, so we eventually settled on the raised-before-the-battle approach. This was, we felt, still consistent with the Warhammer lore.

The old list utilised three existing spells plus a unique one. The 2009 designer notes suggested that they had given this aspect some thought, and earlier playtesting suggested the spell deck was reasonable. We therefore saw no reason to change it. However, we decided early on that it was not sustainable to have expensive dragons as the only spell casters; hence they became a single upgrade option. But if you take this terror-causing character, you limit your number of potential Terracotta commanders.

We also felt the old list did not reflect the Warhammer lore of the empire co-opting neighbouring tribes as light cavalry. Hence we broke the Chariots and Cavalry out into three types. This should also give players an opportunity to use existing Orc and Goblin models within their armies. A similar logic influenced our decision to replace Tiger Guards with Ogres; it enhanced the fantasy element, fitted with the fluff, and allowed players to integrate commonly-owned models. And, of course, those with existing Tiger Guards models can continue to play them with the new profile.

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