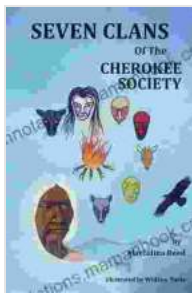


# Unveiling the Seven Clans of the Cherokee Society: A Journey Through History and Culture

The Cherokee Nation, an ancient and resilient Native American tribe, has a rich cultural heritage that has been passed down through generations. One of the most fundamental aspects of Cherokee society is its clan system, a complex and intricate network of families and lineages that has shaped the tribe's history, traditions, and identity.



## Seven Clans of The Cherokee Society by Marcelina Reed

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At the heart of the Cherokee clan system lie the Seven Clans, each with its own distinct history, symbols, and responsibilities. These clans are not simply social groupings but also serve as the foundation for Cherokee governance, kinship, and spiritual beliefs.

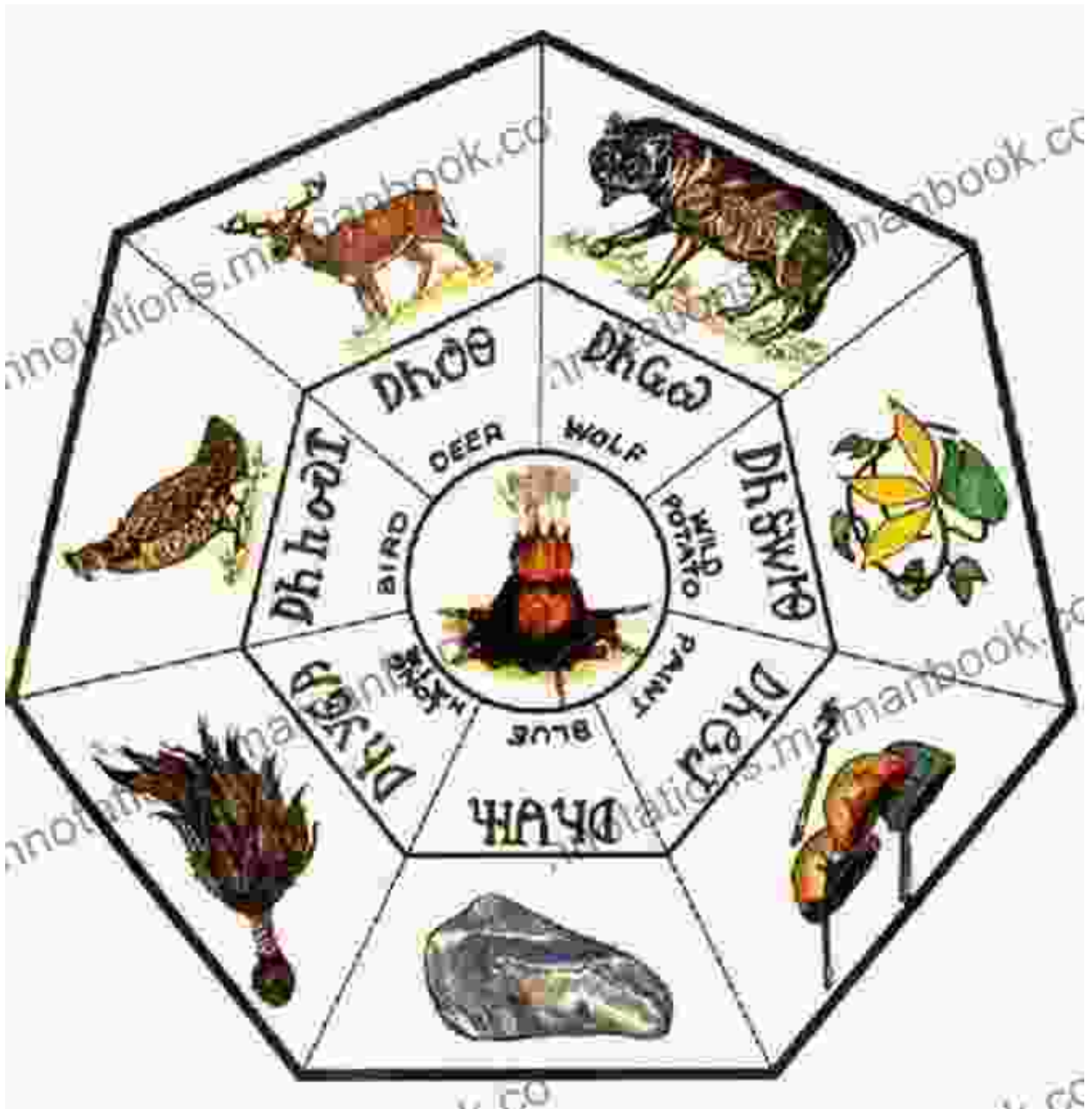
## Origins of the Seven Clans

The origins of the Seven Clans are shrouded in the mists of time, with various legends and stories explaining their creation. One common belief is that the clans emerged from seven different animal spirits that guided the Cherokee people to their ancestral homeland in the Appalachian Mountains.

Another legend tells of a great flood that swept away the original Cherokee settlement. As the waters receded, seven men emerged from a cave, each representing a different clan. These men are believed to be the ancestors of the modern Cherokee people.

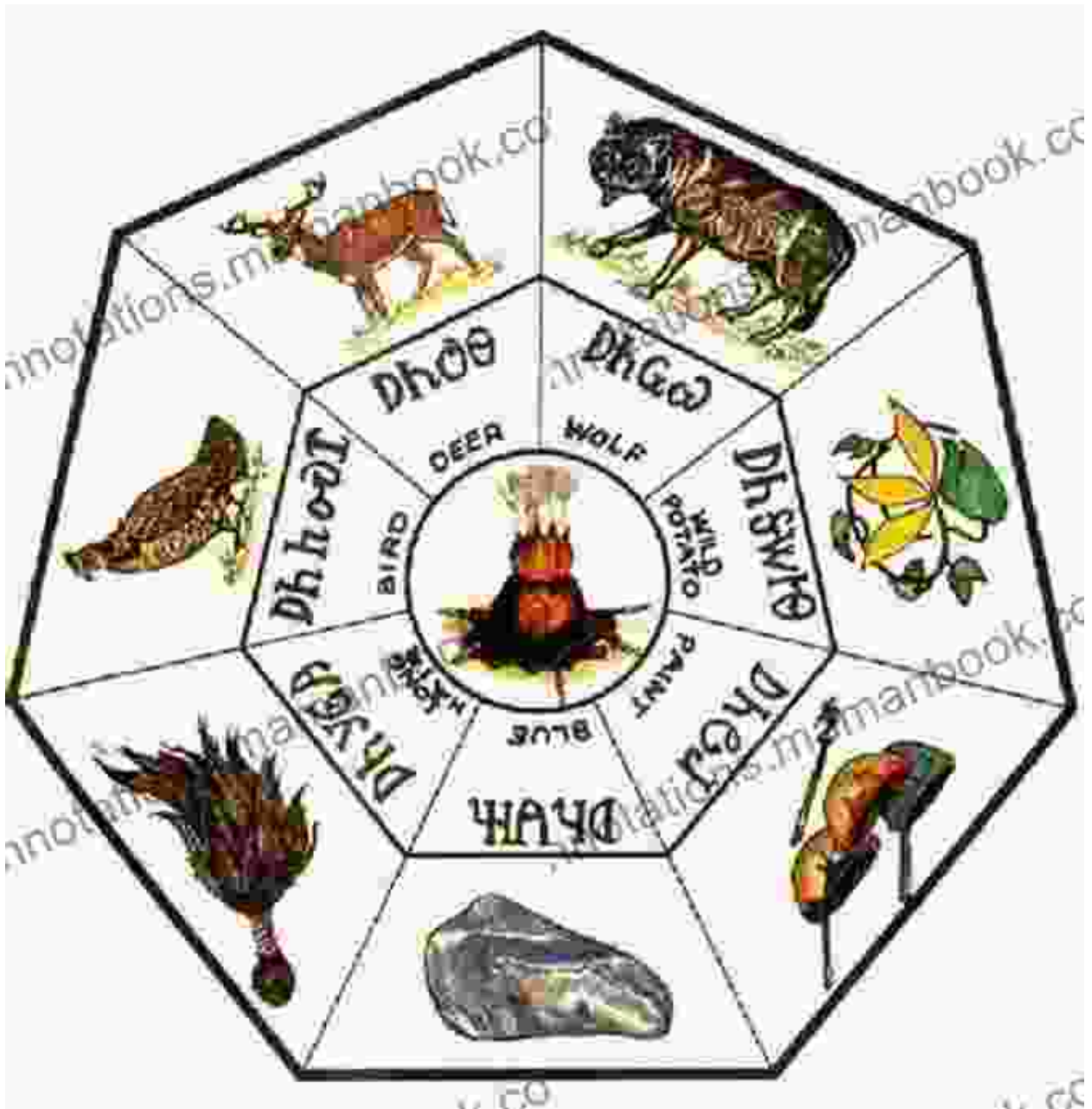
## **The Seven Clans**

1. **Wolf Clan** (Aniwaya) - The Wolf Clan is known for its strength, courage, and leadership. Its symbol is a wolf, and its members are often known for their hunting skills.



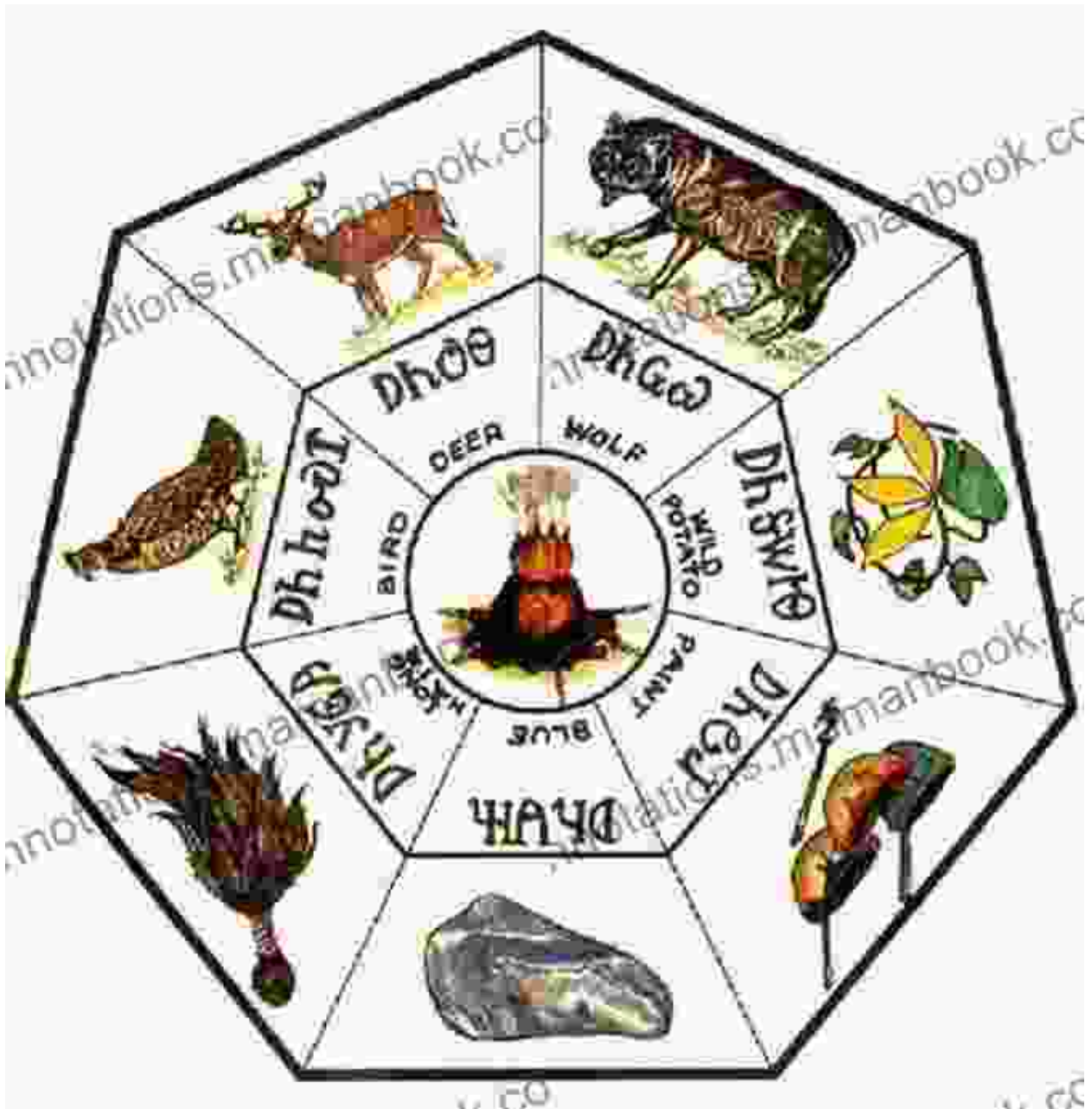
Symbol of the Cherokee Wolf Clan

2. **Deer Clan** (Aniyvwiya) - The Deer Clan is associated with gentleness, speed, and grace. Its symbol is a deer, and its members are often known for their artistry and craftsmanship.



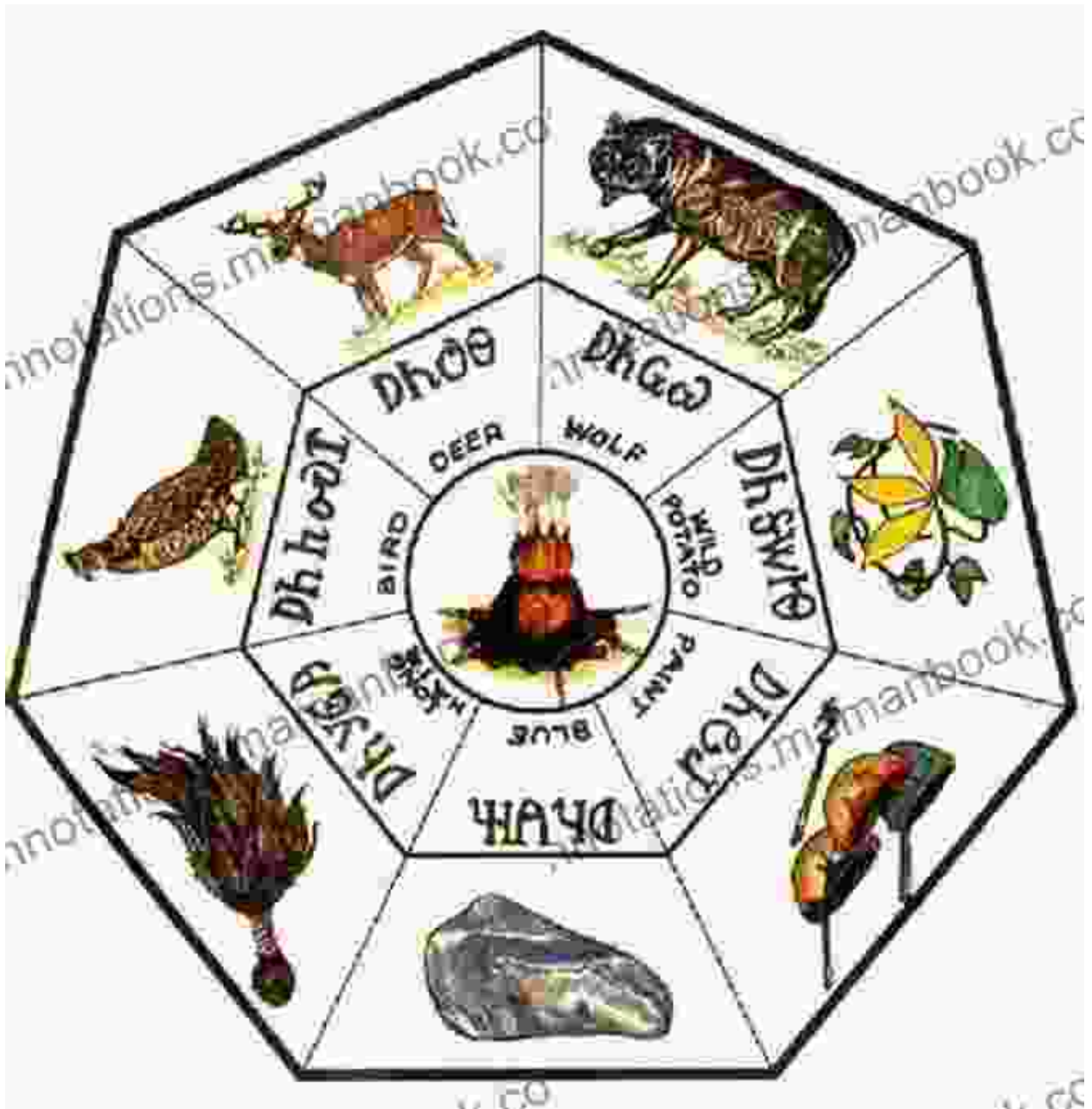
Symbol of the Cherokee Deer Clan

3. **Bird Clan** (Anigilohi) - The Bird Clan is known for its wisdom, intelligence, and communication skills. Its symbol is a bird, and its members are often known for their knowledge and diplomacy.



Symbol of the Cherokee Bird Clan

4. **Paint Clan** (Anigatogewi) - The Paint Clan is associated with art, beauty, and creativity. Its symbol is a paintbrush, and its members are often known for their artistic talents.



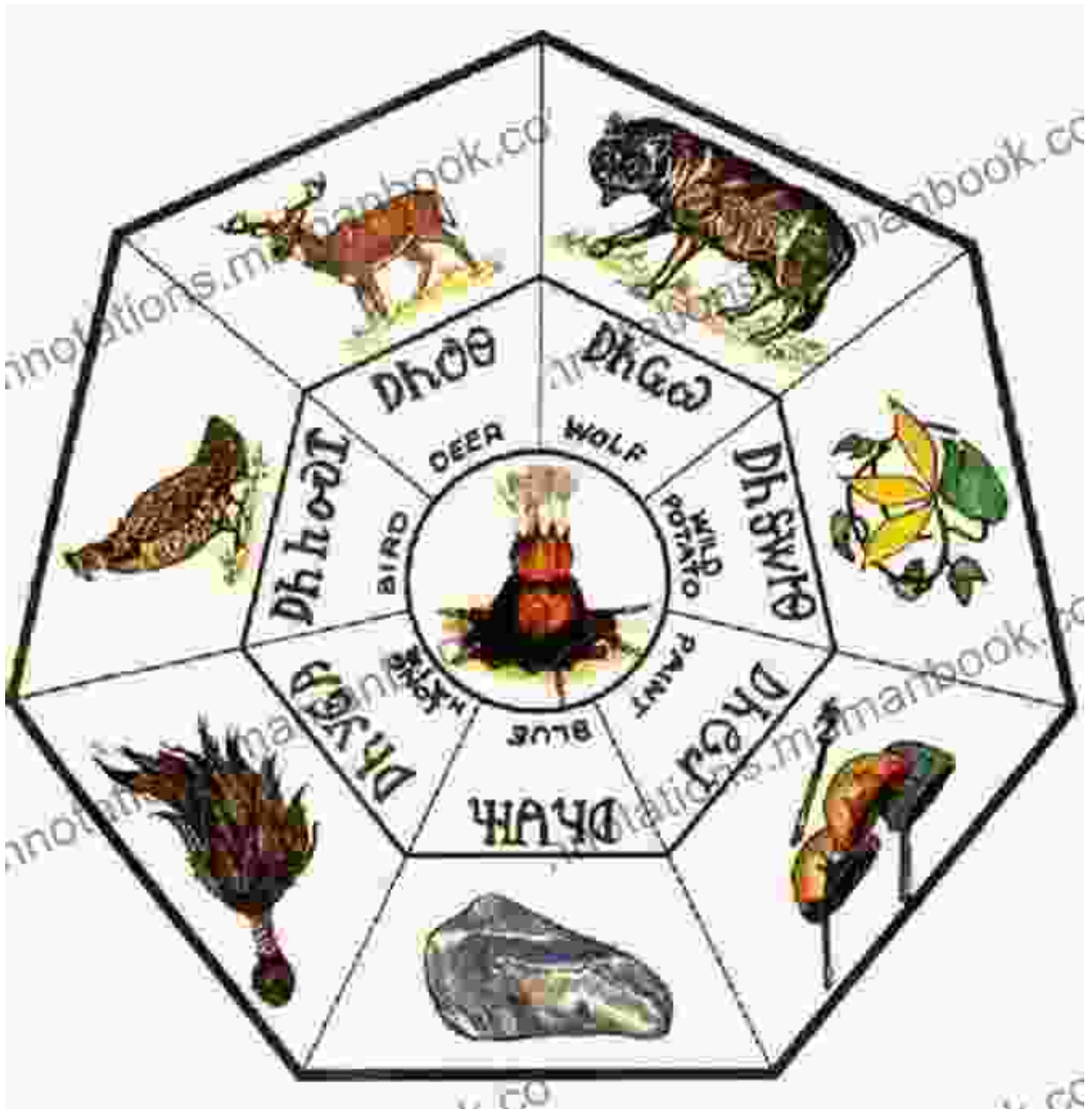
Symbol of the Cherokee Paint Clan

5. **Long Hair Clan** (Aniwodi) - The Long Hair Clan is known for its spirituality, healing, and medicine. Its symbol is a long hair, and its members are often known for their knowledge of herbal remedies.



Symbol of the Cherokee Long Hair Clan

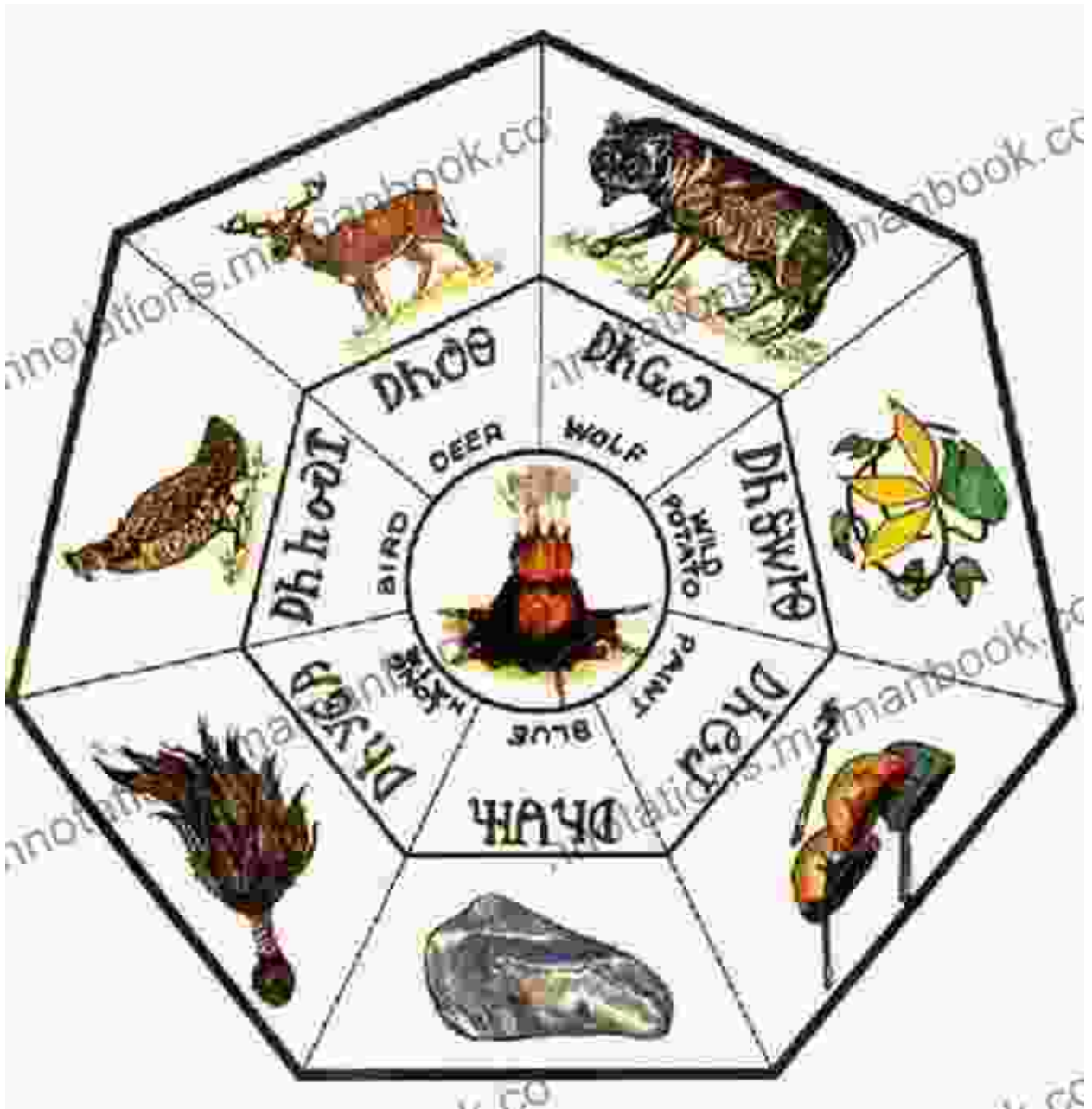
6. **Wild Potato Clan** (Anitsiskwa) - The Wild Potato Clan is associated with agriculture, sustenance, and fertility. Its symbol is a wild potato, and its members are often known for their farming skills.



Symbol of the Cherokee Wild Potato Clan

7. **Blue Clan** (Anigisga) - The Blue Clan is associated with water, rain, and thunder. Its symbol is a bluebird, and its members are often known for their fishing skills.





Symbol of the Cherokee Blue Clan

### Significance of the Clans

The Seven Clans play a vital role in Cherokee society, serving as the foundation for:

- **Lineage and Identity:** Each Cherokee person belongs to one of the Seven Clans, which determines their lineage and identity within the tribe.
- **Governance:** The clans form the basis of Cherokee governance, with each clan having its own headman and council.
- **Kinship:** The clans create a network of kinship that extends beyond immediate family, defining who is considered a relative and who is not.
- **Marriage:** Traditionally, Cherokee people were forbidden from marrying within their own clan, ensuring the diversity of the tribe.
- **Spirituality:** The clans have their own spiritual beliefs and ceremonies, often connected to their animal totems.

## **Matrilineal Society**

One unique aspect of Cherokee society is its matrilineal nature, meaning that descent and inheritance are traced through the maternal line. This matrilineal system is reflected in the clan structure, with each clan being matrilineal as well.

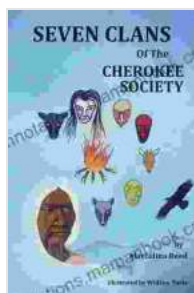
In a matrilineal society, children inherit their clan from their mother, and their status and responsibilities within the clan are determined by their mother's lineage. This system has had a profound impact on Cherokee culture, emphasizing the importance of women and family.

## **Enduring Legacy**

Despite the challenges faced by the Cherokee Nation over the centuries, including forced removal from their ancestral lands and assimilation into

dominant society, the Seven Clans have endured as a testament to the resilience and strength of the Cherokee people.

Today, the clans continue to play a vital role in Cherokee society, influencing everything from governance to spirituality. They serve as a reminder of the rich cultural heritage of the Cherokee Nation and the importance of preserving its traditions.



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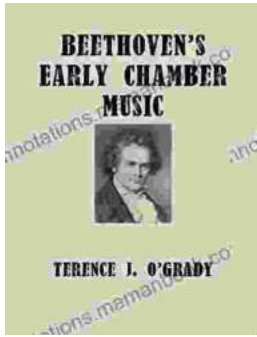
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