



PEOPLE OF THE STORVAL PLATEAU

THE SHOANTI WAY OF LIFE

"All right now, gather round—in a moment the Axe Clan will round the cliff side and be right upon us. This better go off without a hitch, so let's all review the rules one more time. First: no staring at their tattoos. Get over it and be man enough to look them in the eye. But for gods' sake, don't try to stare them down. We're here to deliver the grain, say 'thanks for your efforts,' and get the hell out. In the unlikely event one of them is interested in talking, keep it light and simple—follow my lead. Don't act like you're shocked that some of them speak Common—that's why it's called the common tongue. Absolutely no religion. Don't ask about their spirit totems; that's their private business. And no politics. For gods' sake, if anyone even so much as mentions Bloodsworn Vale I will kill you where you stand and spare them the trouble!"

—Tors Kaiman,
agent of Magnimar's Council of Ushers at the annual delivery of the Calvatarium

The seven quahs (clans) of the Shoanti roam the harshest environments of Varisia, from the Cinderlands to the Calphiak Mountains and from the Curchain Hills to the Storval Plateau. Known for their warlike nature and proud traditions, the Shoanti claim all of Varisia as their own, although they have been forced to cede its southern lands to waves of Chelish conquest. A disparate people, bound together by honor and tradition, the Shoanti share a history steeped in conflict, from their brutally heroic legends to the defeats of the recent past and the harshness of their modern lives. Shaped by strife, the Shoanti are stalwart, tenacious, and suspicious people, oath-sworn to regain all that was once theirs and honor-bound to avenge themselves against all schemers who would dare call them barbarians.

The essence of “Shoanti” is more of a set of warrior traditions than it is a true racial group. While by and large most Shoanti are humans, some quahs have adopted foreigners and exiles from other races. Among individual, open-minded tribes, those who demonstrate that they share Shoanti ideals and face the trials of their adoptive quah find themselves welcomed after a measure of persistence. As such, a small number of dwarves, half-elves, and non-native humans on occasion live among the Shoanti. Indeed, in many ways, demihumans have a much easier time overcoming the Shoanti’s ingrained mistrust of outsiders than Chelaxians.

Shoanti possess widely varying skin tones, reflecting the broad diversity of their ancestry from the time of the Azghat, the cruel gods their lore claims carried them to the Storval region in the time before time. Regardless of pigmentation, almost all Shoanti are vigorous, with powerful builds. Most adult males are more than 6 feet in height and adult females are only slightly shorter. Hair is considered a dangerous weakness in hand-to-hand combat, and both men and women typically shave their heads, save for shamans or the elderly. This practice is more pronounced among the eastern tribes, who are typically born with straight hair, and less so amongst the westernmost Shadde-Quah. Some young Shoanti men and women forgo this practice as a sign that they are not bound to another and seek a companion.

Their culture besieged, their world changing, the Shoanti fiercely struggle to hold onto the traditions of their people and fight against a world seemingly intent on their destruction. Yet, having survived against the giants of the Kodar Mountains, the predators of the wastes, drought, starvation, and lands that burn for centuries, the people of the Storval Plateau alone will decide when their time is at an end—and that time is not now.

“And So It Was” by Angmack the Destrier

“Stand ready for the campaign at all times,” the Azghat said. And so it was. The Azghat brought order to the world and we

were their Shoanti, their blades. Where there was dissension, the Shoanti brought order and peace in the name of the Azghat. To be Shoanti was the greatest of honors, for the Shoanti were selected by the Azghat from those of the greatest skill, speed, strength, and honor. The Azghat’s gift to us was to organize us into quahs and unto each quah was given purpose, a commitment unique to its gifts. And so it was.

Then came the time of the Hollow Sky. The forces of those who rebelled against the will of the Azghat rose so great that the Shoanti began to dwindle in number. In response, the Azghat took it upon themselves to share their honor with the Shoanti so as to renew our battered resolve. But this was a terrible misstep. With their honor diminished, the Azghat fell into a spiral of evil, and with each passing year the Azghat grew closer to becoming one with the very enemies that moved against them. In time, with the heaviest of hearts, the Shoanti were forced to turn on the great Azghat and with their defeat, the kingdom of the Azghat finally crumbled into dust. And so it was.

To this day, we as Shoanti carry not only our own honor, but the remains of the gift of the Azghat. It is said that those warriors who continue to conduct themselves with honor slowly restore the Azghat’s memory and resurrect the glory of their land. One day, perhaps, the Shoanti debt will be repaid. Until that day, the Shoanti’s enemies will always remain many. Always will our enemies seek to purge us and the memory of the Azghat from the land. But we will not allow this. We will remain here, where the Azghat first brought us together and shaped each quah, in honor of their gift to us. And so it shall be.

“The Tale of the Seven Klars” by Razilk of the Skoan-Quah

After the battle of Angraysan, each of the seven quah-jothka came together to praise one another for their role in the victory. Lajtru of the Spire Clan snapped the blade off of his klar and laid it upon the ground so that it pointed at Halrik of the Hawk Clan. “Your horsemen turned the tide of the battle,” said Lajtru. “No,” answered Halrik, “it was the Wind Clan who showed us the way and where to begin our charge. This battle was over before it began.” And with that Holrik snapped off the blade of his klar and placed it on the ground pointing at Churtan, Quah-Jothka of the Wind Clan. The mute Churtan shook his head and silently arranged his klar blade so that it faced Myton of the Skull Clan. As he did, the remaining quah-jothka each began to place their klars as well, each one giving due to the other quah they thought contributed the most to the victory. When each was done, the quah-jothka looked down and saw that the klar blades were arranged in a seven-pointed star, with each quah recognized by another. When the Azghat came and saw the star upon the ground, the Azghat nodded with approval. “This is the symbol of victory,” said the Azghat.

SHOANTI SHAMANS

The spiritual leaders of the Shoanti, shamans guide their peoples, grant them hope, protect them in battle, and offer balm for their many wounds. Clan shamans (typically adepts, clerics, or druids) exhibit broader connections with totem spirits than everyday warriors. They speak with their tribe's totems and entreat the spirits on behalf of their people. Their rituals and ceremonies are largely unfathomable to those uninitiated in their ways, with long meditations influenced by the consumption of poisonous herbs; interpretations of cloud shapes, rock structures, and animal behavior; and dreams sent from the ancestors being integral to their perception of the spirits' will. A tribe only ever has one shaman, though he typically has as many as four young apprentices who learn the history of the quah and aid him in safeguarding the ancient knowledge of the spirits.

Clerical Shoanti shamans worship their clan's totems, which are typically of neutral alignment and grant domains as noted in the descriptions of each quah. The favored weapon of Shoanti totems is either the klar or the longbow.

Many Shoanti shamans—as well as those under their protection—take the Totem Spirit feat described in the *Rise of the Runelords Player's Guide*.

SHOANTI SOCIETY

The Shoanti people are divided into seven distinctive nations called quahs. The seven quahs share a common heritage, culture, and way of life. Although there are many societal variations between the quahs, the gulf between the quahs and other cultures is much larger. Each quah is further subdivided into tribes of varying sizes. Each tribe or sub-clan is led by its own war-chief, called a jothka. Each tribe's jothka in turn answers the call of the quah-jothka, the military and political leader of the entire clan. Together, the jothkas of every tribe form the quah-jothka's counsel of war that the quah-jothka calls together in times of need. All jothkas are advised by their tribes shamans and thundercallers—wise storytellers and performers who pass on the lessons of ages past.

By tradition, the Shoanti are seasonally nomadic hunter-gatherers, with most tribes following the Storval Plateau's great herds of aurochs, although some quahs engage in subsistence farming or a small amount of trade in favored lands. In centuries past, several Shoanti quahs established fixed settlements in southern Varisia, but such outposts served as forts, not centers of trade. Since their defeat by Chelish colonizers, most Shoanti have eschewed fixed settlements, seeing a need to defend a particular piece of land as an invitation to their many enemies.

The Shoanti do not recognize the concept of personal property when it comes to land, although they do define territories as belonging to one quah or another. They do not

use coins amongst themselves, but recognize the value of such objects when trading with other cultures. Aside from weapons and armor, the Shoanti own most items (such as yurts) collectively and gladly share within their tribe.

Enemies and Outsiders

The Shoanti are typically unwelcoming of outsiders and more inclined to fight than trade. If a member of a tribe offers sanctuary to an outsider (the act of "Ortak-Hurong"), however, then the entire tribe is obligated to respect the gift until such time as the tribe's jothka or shaman intervenes. The Shoanti's enemies are numerous and include the giants of the Kodar, the orcs of the Hold of Belzken, raiders from the Lands of the Linnorm Kings, and Chelish immigrants. In the latter case, few Shoanti care to differentiate between true Chelaxians, the disparate non-native residents of southern Varisia, and travelers from the southeast—all are considered invaders. While no armies currently muster at the foot of the Storval Rise, the nomads still consider themselves besieged, as every year more and more foreigners trod upon their tribal lands and many communities hold Shoanti as dangerous primitives. Although few communities murder Shoanti outright, within recent memory the Korvosan government paid bounties on Shoanti scalps. The Order of the Nail Hellknights also see the barbarians as threats to law and peace in southern Varisia and actively—and sometimes violently—seek to dissuade Shoanti from traveling beyond the Storval Plateau. Both affronts remain sore subjects in the Shoanti mind, and many still seek revenge for countless specific dishonors.

Religion

The Shoanti belief system heavily incorporates the notion of spiritual totems: natural spirits that watch over and guide warriors who have the wisdom to accept their protection and influence. It is said that spirits first identify themselves to warriors in the form of a vision at the precipice of adulthood, typically during a sacred but dangerous rite of passage organized by the clan's shaman and unique to each quah (see The Seven Quahs). The various quahs each hold particular totems as sacred, and their members find themselves guided by these forces more often than those of other quahs. While most totems are the spirits of animals or magical beasts, some Shoanti claim to have instead been gifted with revelations from powers that guide natural forces such as rivers, the rarely glimpsed Athaureon (northern lights), or even the Cinderlands' deadly emberstorms.

While the Shoanti are well aware of the roles of the gods of Golarion—and worship is not unheard of by Shoanti who leave their people—among the various quahs, shamans practice a combination of animism, ancestor worship, and druidism, revering the often violent spirits of the natural

world and heroes of the past. While individuals are not worshiped, the feats of dead warriors and tendencies of great beasts or powerful natural events are often invoked, particularly in inspirational ceremonies before hunts and battles. All Shoanti revere those who came before them and respect the powers of the land that—while often cruel—still supports their people.

THE SEVEN QUAHS

The Shoanti are not one people but many—seven nations united by heritage and lifestyle. The various quahs largely respect one another and their lands, making disagreements over resources, territory disputes, and other politics—widely held as distasteful and duplicitous—few. When conflicts do arise, small skirmishes and individual battles between champions quickly determine whom the spirits favor.



Although it is said there were once as many as nine clans, there are currently seven Shoanti quahs—the same number Shoanti lore says were forged in the distant past. While certain quahs are respected for different reasons and each has its own ways and traditions, among their people all are accorded the respect of honored warriors.

Lyrune-Quah (The Moon Clan)

Known to be expert bowmen and hunters, the swift-footed and keen-eyed warriors of the Lyrune-Quah hunt by dusk and travel by the light of the bright Storval moon. The Clan of the Moon embraces wisdom as much as strength, knowing that one arrow loosed from a precisely aimed bow can fell a giant more effectively than a band of wildly swinging brawlers.

The Moon Clan's true traditional rivals are the Sun Clan, and centuries ago the two quahs fought bitterly to establish the borders of their respective territories. The two quahs are far more alike than each cares to admit, though, and each quah respects the martial prowess of the other. Now that both have become irrevocably invested in battling their own separate wars with outsiders, they are far more frequently riding to each other's aid as allies than as enemies. Warriors of the two quahs value nothing more than bragging rights gained by helping members of the other quah out of a tough scrape.

Territory: The Clan of the Moon traverses the open lands east of the Wyvern Mountains, ranging between the Kazaron River and the Yondabakari River.

Rite of Passage: The Black Walk. On a moonless night, the young brave must find the entrance to an underground cave complex in the Wyvern Mountains. He must then traverse the dangerous caverns and emerge on the other side, a feat typically lasting several days. It is during the Black Walk that many Lyrune-Quah braves first receive a vision from their future totems.

Common Totems: Bat, cave bear, field mouse, moon, mountain lion, mountains, owl, rainstorm, stars, wolf.

Totem Domains: Animal, Darkness, Strength, Weather, War.

Shadde-Quah (The Axe Clan)

The warriors and hunters of the Axe Clan are expert divers and harpooners, and their people subsist on a diet of fish, crustaceans, and black abalone. In lieu of yurts, the Shadde-Quah dwells in sea caves scattered along the coast, many of which are now linked by narrow twisting passages hand-dug by the Shoanti. They are one of the few Shoanti quahs who enjoy permanent settlements.

The Shadde-Quah are quite isolated, largely cut off from their Shoanti brethren to the east. Despite their isolation, the Shadde-Quah play an important role in the defense of coastal Varisia. The Lands of the Linnorm Kings mount

COMMON SHOANTI EXPRESSIONS

The Shoanti are a proud and aloof people. When dealing with outsiders, their words are likely to be colored by the basic greetings and most fiercely held truths of their people.

Storval dharanok ekbit roark Shoanti.

Our thunder rolls across the Storval Plateau.
(The Shoanti defend the Storval Plateau.)

Kel-grish!

Greetings!
(A common welcoming.)

Sharatok... tshamek.

Be received... stranger.
(A colder, more formalized greeting for outsiders.)

Ferik niklit forenk skoans.

Until our skulls are gathered.
(We fight until our death.)

Ahk Storval—rel abeshk!

Away from our lands!
(A final territorial warning.)

Irok devit fendrik swork.

By blood it is sworn.
(An iron-clad vow.)

Storval ekbitel nalharest!

We walk the land as brothers!
(An oath accepting someone not of one's quah as a brother.)

regular nautical incursions along the western shores of Varisia in hopes of establishing an outpost on the Varisian Gulf. The Axe Clan views such incursions as a threat to its domain and posts hawk-eyed spotters on the seaward peaks of the western Calphiaks. When a northern fleet is spotted, word quickly spreads throughout the tribe, and the warriors of the Clan of the Axe sail out in their wavecutters—fast-moving outriggers—to attack the raiders. In recent decades, Magnimar's Council of Ushers has dispatched what has become known as the Calvitarium, a fleet of caravels laden with harvested grains as payment and thanks to the Clan of the Axe for its efforts in guarding the northern approach to the Varisian Gulf.

Territory: The Clan of the Axe claims the coastal valleys of the Calphiak Mountains.

Rite of Passage: The Return. This harsh ritual requires a young warrior to be bound and dropped into the ocean depths. Survival requires bursting oneself free from

the bonds and then swimming up a fjord against the outgoing tide.

Common Totems: Cave bear, cliff, dire bear, eagle, sea, squid, water elemental.

Totem Domains: Animal, Destruction, Strength, Water, Weather.

Shriikirri-Quah (The Hawk Clan)

The Shriikirri-Quah reveres the animals with which it shares the land. It is the Hawk Clan, more so than any other clan, that believes the study of the nature's beasts holds the key to victory against its foes. Both predators and prey have much to teach to a Shoanti who watches and listen. As such, the Hawk Clan swells with both expert hunters and animal trainers. The quah's braves' skill as horsemen is rivaled only by the riders of the Velashu Uplands.

Although they retain many of the traditional cultural prejudices against Chelaxians, the Shoanti of the Hawk Clan are also the most likely of the seven quahs to interact with other peoples. For many generations, the Clan of the Hawk has been the face of the Shoanti to the people of southwestern Varisia. Chelish inhabitants of Magnimar's holdings and Ravenmoor regularly trade with emissaries from the Clan of the Hawk, falsely assuming that the other Shoanti tribes of the Storval Plateau are much the same. The other Shoanti quahs have begun to look down upon the "soft" members of the Shriikirri-Quah who have grown too friendly with their land's invaders.

Territory: The Clan of the Hawk ranges far in its travels, from the Gnashers to the Churlwood, claiming much of the Curchain Hills between the Chavali River and Lampblack River as its demesne. Members of this tribe regularly camp at the bottom and top of the Storval Stairs, keeping this important trade artery open to passage.

Rite of Passage: The Plummet. Shriikirri braves undergo many tests, the culmination of which is the Plummet: a leap of faith off of the Storval Rise. The brave is saved from certain death by a hawk shaman who wildshapes into a giant raptor and swoops down to snatch the brave just before he hits the ground. It is said that the rush and trauma of the impending doom has attracted many a spirit to grant a fleeting vision.

Common Totems: Air elemental, cloud, firepelt, forest grove, hawk, horse, hippogriff, and wind.

Totem Domains: Animal, Air, Liberation, Strength, Weather.

Shundar-Quah (The Spire Clan)

The Shundar-Quah see themselves as the diplomats and storytellers of the Shoanti people, smoothing tensions between the various clans. Their tribes travel far and continually remind the other quahs that every clan is first and foremost Shoanti, and that brotherhood and



bringing honor to their people must be the ambition of every warrior.

Members of the Shundar-Quah hold the monolith wonder Spindlehorn sacred. Once a decade, the shamans of the Shundar-Quah perform a pilgrimage to the shadow of Spindlehorn, on the eastern shore of the Storval Deep. There, they commune with their totems, share what they have learned, and discuss matters that concern their quah and all others.

Because the Shundar-Quah see the welfare of all Shoanti as their sacred trust, by necessity they must also have an interest in each clan's warfare. Whenever a quah loses ground to a significant foe, it is the Spire Clan that is first to bring offers of reinforcements. To this end, Spire Clan braves train to duplicate the tactics of their fellow quahs so that they can swell their brethren's ranks as seamlessly as possible.

Territory: To this day, the Clan of the Spire wanders across the northern Storval Plateau, ever seeking to unite the Shoanti tribes into a single people. They fend for themselves in the custom of the local Shoanti tribes in whose territory they wander.

Rite of Passage: The Journey. Young members of the Shundar-Quah must journey into the world and spend 3

years among the members of another quah. There, they learn of the differing ways of their people, their problems and their strengths. At the end of this tenure—easily the longest rite of passage of any of the quahs—they return to their clan more experienced, world-wise, and informed.

Common Totems: Earth elemental, mountain spire, rock fall, spiretalker, storm roc. Although rare, some Spire Clan warriors are adopted by a totem of their host tribe.

Totem Domains: Animal, Knowledge, Protection, Rune, Weather.

Sklar-Quah (The Sun Clan)

More so than any other clan in recent memory, the Sklar-Quah find themselves embattled by their foes. Since its retreat over the Storval Rise from southern Varisia, the Sun Clan has found itself in a vise between orc marauders from the Hold of Belkzen and foreign invaders. The Sklar-Quah now acts as an unwitting buffer, protecting its two enemies from one another, a reality that has cost the blood of countless sons and daughters.

Sun Clan youth are taught to hate *tshamek* (non-Shoanti) at an early age. Their day-to-day prejudice is viewed as a necessary component of their well-honed survival

instincts. Indeed, the xenophobia is clan-deep; the Sklar-Quah's shamans are the most warlike among the shaman of any quah.

Many Sklar-Quah warriors aspire to join the ranks of the Sklar-Quah's famed burn riders, their elite mounted cavalry who are able to coax their horses to race through the flames and wildfires of the Cinderlands. Burn riders frequently shave much more than just their heads to protect themselves from the flames, and tend to wear minimal armor and clothing.

The quah's oral history claims that its ancestors once inhabited the fertile lands east of the Fenwall Mountains, and honored their totems from a sacred site upon a massive pyramid (now the site of the city-state of Korvosa) but that they were driven into the Cinderlands by Chelish colonists after decades of battle (see *Pathfinder Chronicles: Guide to Korvosa*).

Territory: The warlike Clan of the Sun inhabits the eastern and central reaches of the Cinderlands, both south of the Kazaron River as well as the plains south and east of the Yondabakari River.

Rite of Passage: The Burn Run. While there are several variations among Sklar-Quah tribes, in its most common form, a brave must outrace a wildfire, bolting for the shelter of a river or fire break before he is overcome by smoke and consumed by the flames.

Common Totems: Aurochs, cindersnake, emberstorm, fire elemental, fire pelt, sun.

Totem Domains: Animal, Fire, Strength, War, Weather.

Skoan-Quah (The Skull Clan)

All six of the other quahs still shudder on occasion when they deal with the enigmatic Skull Clan and its impenetrable skull shamans. Warriors of the Skoan-Quah cake their bodies with a mixture of mud and ash, making their skin smoky white. This ritual is said to give them protection against the walking dead, whom they are sworn to destroy.

The Skull Clan is zealous in its protection and honoring of the dead. Many Skull Clan tribes sojourn far to consecrate the burial sites of their fellow Shoanti. This service is grudgingly appreciated by the other clans, who respect the power of the Skull Clan and their totems, even if their morbid shamans quietly unnerve them. The most honored dead of each tribe are entrusted into the Skull Clan's care, leaving the guardians of the dead to transport such heroes to the Shoanti's most honored burial grounds—the Kallow Mounds to the east and the Life Falls to the west. The Skoan-Quah also shoulders the duty of acting as the historians of the Shoanti as a whole. In this way, the memories of many Shoanti live on with the Skoan-Quah, long after their own quah might have forgotten.

Territory: The Skull Clan keeps to the ancestral burial lands of their people, primarily surrounding the Kallow

Mounds of the southeastern Cinderlands and the Life Falls northeast of the Stony Mountains.

Rite of Passage: The Yawning Cave. The final test a Skoan-Quah brave must undergo is to enter a tight cave complex within the Mindspin Mountains and exit after retrieving an animal skull (usually signifying the young brave's future totem). The skull shaman, however, wards the cave with glyphs laced with fear-inspiring magic, making progress within the cave extremely challenging.

Common Totems: Ancestor spirit, earth elemental, giant scarab beetle, vulture, will-o'-wisp, wolf.

Totem Domains: Animal, Darkness, Earth, Protection, Repose.



Tamiir-Quah (The Wind Clan)

Cloaked in the skins and feathers of mountain lions, Lurkwood bears, and storm rocs, the Tamiir-Quah know the hardship of their Sklar-Quah brothers to the east and stand determined not to lose their mountainous homes. While not utterly murderous like the savages of the Nolands, they have little patience for trespassers and sternly—even violently—warn off any who come too near.

During the winter months, the Tamiir-Quah take shelter in a multitude of caves along the western fringe of the Storval Plateau. Once winter gives way to the spring thaw, the tribe moves up into small, lush mountaintop valleys fed by cold mountain springs that are carefully tended. From these high gardens, the Tamiir-Quah mount lightning raids down onto the plateau, attacking any who dare trespass in their domain.

The Clan of the Wind occasionally attacks travelers in the western Curchain Hills and even as far south as the road between Riddleport and Roderic's Cove—driving much traffic between those two communities onto the waters of the Varisian Gulf.

Territory: The secluded Clan of the Wind pervades the Stony Mountains, claiming all territory within sight of the mountains as their land. In truth, though, most tribes of the Tamiir-Quah keep to within 50 miles of the mountains' eastern and southern hills.

Rite of Passage: The Longest Cross. The final test for a Tamiir-Quah brave is a marathon-style race through the mountains, lasting several grueling days. Exhausted and weak, the young Shoanti are often vulnerable to predators.

Common Totems: Air elemental, cloud, griffin, storm, storm roc, wind.

Totem Domains: Animal, Air, Earth, Protection, War.

SHOANTI TATTOOS

Upon completing their quah's rite of passage, both male and female Shoanti receive their first tattoo. These designs sometimes wrap around the newly accepted adult's torso and limbs, and even up the neck and across the face. Chosen and traced by a tribe's shaman or thundercaller, hundreds of different tattoo designs exist, each being drawn from an expansive traditional assortment of symbols with their own varied meanings and implications. These tattoos are typically inked with pigments created from clay and vegetation native to the lands a quah inhabits, giving the symbols of each clan distinctive colorations. While a Shoanti receives his tattoo as part of the celebration marking his survival of his quah's rite of passage, this mark is only the basis of a design that expands and evolves over the course of the wearer's life. With each decade and every significant accomplishment, the tribe's shaman or a thundercaller

TATTOOS OF THE QUAHS

Each Shoanti quah has its own styles of tattooing and symbols that are either favored or particularly pertinent to their people. While these runes might appear among members of other clans, for warriors of certain quahs they hold particular prestige.

Lyrune-Quah: Hunters of the Clan of the Moon tend to favor symbols suggestive of the night, sight, and wisdom. The runes Navrik (Eyeless Sight), Lyon (The Great Moon), and Vinic (Piercing Stone) hold particular prestige.

Shadde-Quah: Among the Axe Clan, runes that suggest vitality, endurance, and traits of the ocean and its beasts are greatly desired, among them Vonark (Many Arms), Donark (The Long Armed), and Eanaw (The Endless Journey).

Shriikirri-Quah: The Clan of the Hawk favors symbols suggestive of travel, the wilds, and animals—particularly the horse. The symbols Rotomo (Headwind), Ingir (Beast Heart), and Iyavak (The Pack) are among the most desirable.

Shundar-Quah: Unity, watchfulness, and the ability to lead are all vaunted virtues of the Clan of the Spire. For them, the runes Drimiil (Guardian Heart), Kokip (Sentinel), and Klartitil (Broad Klar) carry extra weight.

Sklar-Quah: The fires of their land and way of the warrior fill the hearts of the Clan of the Sun. Among the Sklar-Quah, the greatest warriors bear the runes Damkil (Orc Skull), Akmiz (Fire Hand), and Razkiv (Emberstorm).

Skoan-Quah: Members of the Clan of the Skull adorn their bodies with symbols of bones and skulls, their favored patterns creating the symbols Sosmo (Forever Dead), Eiril (Duty), and Graxt (Eternity).

Tamiir-Quah: The raiders of the Wind Clan often bear symbols related to speed, freedom, and their mountain homes. The runes Dra (Mist), Cilvat (Wind Soul), and Sovola (The Roc King) bring particular honor.

embellishes upon an adult's tattoo, adding flourishes and elaborations, each of which alters the meaning of the base rune. While specific meanings are often vague, quah members can always identify the symbols of their tribes, and a tattoo's wearer can proudly account for every specific mark.

For example, upon being accepted as an adult, the Sklar-Quah warrior Ardirik receives the rune known as *Cidir*, a mark meaning "power through wrath." Upon aiding his fellow hunters in the defeat of a particularly destructive orc raiding band, Ardirik is called upon by his tribe's shaman, who elaborates upon his tattoo with numerous vaguely klar-shaped protrusions, suggesting his role as defender. Upon attaining his 40th summer, Ardirik is again summoned, receiving new lengths to his tattoo that creep farther across his arms and neck, suggesting growth and a deepening of the core symbol's meaning.