

Welcome 'o seeker of wisdom. Some time ago I began a study of the mysterious ise zumi. The call went out to the many members of the Cyber Assembly to come forward with any knowledge they might have about thirty tattoos that I had heard rumors of or found traces of in the Asako histories. Many answered the call. This is a summary of the most reliable accounts of the powers associated with these rare tattoos.

1. Back Banner (Sashimono) - by Sir Callin

The sashimono is used by samurai to herald who they are and as a rallying point for their troops during times of conflict.

Effect: When the power of the tattoo is activated the ise zumi begins to glow a bright gold, something which is readily seen across the breadth of a battlefield. All allies within 10' x the ise zumi's Honor Rank roll an extra die for attacks and gain an extra die to roll and keep when resisting Fear effects. The ise zumi can activate the tattoo a number of times a day equal to his School Rank. The effects last one minute x the ise zumi's School Rank or one Battle Turn.

Cost: The ise zumi does not gain the benefit of the tattoo himself. However, due to the glow, he often is a target for opposing forces. During any armed conflict the enemy will single out the Ise Zumi using the tattoo for attack. If rolling on the Battle Table the ise zumi is automatically shifted one column to the right (if possible).

2. Bonsai Tree - by Sir Callin

The art of the Bonsai consists of dwarfing a tree. This requires careful pruning and control of the way in which the plant grows. In the end it creates a living, breathing tree in miniature.

Effect: Once a day for a number of hours equal to his School Rank the ise zumi is able to shrink himself and the clothes he is wearing down to any smaller size he desires, down to a minimum height of one inch. He must choose one size and can not shrink to a different size until the next day. Ending the effect early requires a full minute of meditation with a TN of 15.

Cost: The obvious cost is that the ise zumi can become too small to actually do anything or even use his own possessions. Such things as climbing stairs at one inch tall turns into a major mountaineering expedition, etc. Also, losing even one foot of your height will completely alter the way you interact with the world. The ise zumi's physical skills may not exceed his School Rank while under the effects of this tattoo.

3. Carp (Prosperity)

The Carp tattoo, symbol of the Yasuki family, continues to guard its secrets... for now.

4. Candle - by the Chaolist

The candle shows the link between the material and spiritual worlds, and is often used as an aid to meditation. The essence of the candle is consumed, releasing light and heat. An ise zumi with the candle tattoo is very closely linked to the realm of spirits. The monk must be very careful: by using this tattoo he is essentially burning his own essence, and over use can have terrible consequences...

Effect: The ise zumi can spend extra void points up to his School Rank on any action. This may be done School Rank times per day.

Cost: If the Ise Zumi ever spends his last void point his contact with the material world fades to almost nothing, guttering like a candle on the verge of being extinguished. The maximum number of dice the ise zumi can roll for any action in this state is limited to no more than his School Rank. This lasts until all his void points have been completely replenished.

5. Chimes (Fuurin) - by Sir Callin

Wind chimes have long been placed over the doorways into peasants' homes, as a way of warding off harmful spirits.

Effect: Ise Zumi with this tattoo emit a constant chiming noise heard only by those beings with Shadowlands Taint. These beings are disconcerted by the sacred noise and must make a Willpower roll vs. a TN of 15 to not react obviously to it. A number of turns per day equal to his School Rank the Ise Zumi may increase the force of the chimes. This acts as a Fear effect equal

to his School Rank to all beings with Shadowlands Taint whose Fear Rating is less than the ise zumi's School Rank.

Cost: Due to the constant chiming the ise zumi is unable to sneak up on beings with Shadowlands Taint and they can never be surprised by any group with the ise zumi among them.

6. Coin

The powers of the Coin tattoo remain a mystery to this Phoenix.

7. Constellation - by Pat Gamblin

Throughout Rokugan's history, shugenja and monks have used the heavens as a guide to the future. Symbols and patterns in the stars can give insight into the workings of the universe.

Benefit: This ise zumi may spend a full night meditating under the stars, watching them carefully and, perhaps gain insight into the future or the present. The ise zumi rolls and keeps dice equal to his or her School Rank + Astrology. If the roll is 20 or higher, he has a vision. The vision is very vague, as most visions are. The vision should not state anything blatantly, but, rather, should allude to certain things. Raises to this roll may give more detail or cause the vision to be easier to interpret.

Cost: Knowledge of the future is not always a good thing. The ise zumi cannot spend void points on any action directly pertaining to the events shown in the vision, especially if they are trying to thwart it. This can leave the ise zumi without the benefit of void points for hours or even days as a vision plays itself out!

8. Daikyu and Arrows - by Sir Callan

Effect: This allows the ise zumi to summon and launch an arrow from nothing. He can launch a total number of arrows per day equal to his School Rank. The attack is rolled using Reflexes + Archery. The strength of the 'bow' is equal to his Water Ring. The type of arrow launched depends on the type of arrow that is part of the tattoo. When gaining this tattoo the player chooses the type of arrow that is drawn: ya, armor piercer, watakusi, humming bulb or karimata. Each time the ise zumi gains a School Rank another arrow of the player's choice is added to the design.

Cost: Creating the arrow requires the ise zumi's absolute focus for 5 - School Rank turns. During that time the TN to hit the ise zumi drops to 5. Once formed, the arrow must immediately be used or it fades away.

9. Daisho

The precise effects of the Daisho tattoo have yet to be revealed, but it seems clear that the symbol of the Mirumoto family is only found on ise zumi of Noble Birth.

10. Drum

I have not determined the secrets held by the few ise zumi who have received the tattoo of the Drum.

11. Egg (Sanrau) - by Sir Callan

The egg represents the creation of life from life that already exists: life from life. The tattoo requires another diagram within the egg. The design is up to the player, but common designs are small birds, squirrels, and lizards (or any other animals smaller than a bread-box).

Effect: Once a day per Rank, the ise zumi is able to create a small creature represented in the design as an extension of himself. This animal is able to move on it's own and will follow simple commands from the ise zumi. As this creature is an extension of himself, he is able to use the creature's senses even over distances. All of the creature's Rings equal 1. It can sustain Wounds equal to the ise zumi's Earth, and has no skills.

Cost: Since the creatures are an extension of the ise zumi, if they should be destroyed he will suffer 1 Wound Rank worth of Wounds for each creature killed. These wounds may not be healed by any means except the passage of time.

12. Fan (Courtier's Fan) - by Pat Gamblin

The courtier's fan is the symbol of the courts of Rokugan. The fan is often used to hide a courtier's face and their true intentions.

Benefit: Anyone trying to use Awareness or related skills or techniques on the ise zumi has their TN raised by the ise zumi's School Rank x5.

Cost: The ise zumi finds himself drawn to intrigue. The ise zumi gains the disadvantages of Fascination (politics) and Meddler.

13. Hollow Circle (The Universe) - By Shiba Toma

In the circle one finds unity and perfection. All things arise from a single thing. The circle alludes to the mastery of all arts with no teacher.

Effect: All of the skills an ise zumi tattooed with the hollow circle has that are less than the ise zumi's School Rank are considered to be one rank higher. This does not give the ise zumi a rank of one in skills he has not yet learned. This tattoo has little benefit for the first rank ise zumi.

Cost: The wise man realizes how little he knows. The ise zumi receives two less points of insight (minimum of 0) from each of his skills. When this tattoo is received, recalculate the ise zumi's insight, but this will not cause him to lose School Ranks already achieved.

14. Ivy (Tsuta) - by Andrew Getting

Effect: After meditating for 5 - School Rank minutes the ise zumi may begin to climb any solid surface at their normal walking speed. This Tattoo may be invoked a number of times per day equal to the ise zumi's School Rank.

Cost: Once started, the ise zumi may not stop or pause until they reach the top or are forced off the surface. The ise zumi's TN to be hit is reduced by half while climbing.

15. Sparrow (Humility) - by Jay Wrobel

The sparrow sings its song not for praise but simply because it can. An ise zumi with this tattoo is humble in all aspects of his life. But the most humble of creatures can harbor unexpected depths.

Effect: School Rank times per day, the ise zumi may raise his traits and/or skill levels to equal his opponent in a single Contested Roll or for one turn in other sorts of contests (including melee).

Cost: in all opposed tests the ise zumi's trait and skill levels are reduced to the level of the opponent, if greater than the opponent's. Additionally, the ise zumi needs twice as many glory points to gain Glory Ranks, as he never boasts of his accomplishments, passing on the credit to others.

16. Lightning (Sudden Illumination)

Still do I search for the magic hidden in the Lightning tattoo, symbol of the Kitsuki family.

17. Lucky Cricket - by Jay Wrobel

Crickets are a symbol of luck of the traveler, for they are the silent watchers of the night, singing their songs unless danger approaches.

Effect: This tattoo gives the ise zumi a heightened awareness of danger. The ise zumi rolls and keeps an additional number of dice equal to his School Rank to avoid traps, ambushes, and other hostile surprises.

Cost: the Ise Zumi constantly makes a noise, either whistling, humming, or some other vocalization, even when sleeping. The noise only stops when the ise zumi is in immediate physical danger (facing an opponent) or when the ise zumi spends a void point to control the tattoo. The ise zumi then manages to stifle himself for a number of minutes equal to his School Rank. This noise causes the Ise Zumi to roll one less die for all tests in courtly or formal social settings.

18. Mantis

I am still seeking after the secret of the Mantis tattoo, symbol of the greatest of the minor clans.

19. Mempo - by Pat Gamblin

A samurai's mempo is meant to be fearsome, scaring his enemies or filling them with dread. This tattoo takes the form of a terrifying mask covering the ise zumi's entire face.

Benefit: The ise zumi has a Fear rating equal to his School Rank + 1.

Cost: The Fear effect is continuous. As a result the ise zumi must drop all dice less than his Fear rating on all social rolls.

20. Mirror (round ceremonial type) - by Jay Wrobel

Though the eyes of men may be misled, the mirror only sees purity and the truth.

Effect: The ise zumi may sometimes 'notice' illusions or that a person is tainted, under the effects of a spell, or otherwise disguised. This is not a deliberate act. The GM should make the roll secretly using the ise zumi's Air + School Rank with an average TN of 20 when the character encounters such hidden truths. No details about the falsehood are gained. The ise zumi simply senses that the truth has been hidden.

Cost: Just as the mirror only shows, so too the ise zumi may never tell (either verbally or non-verbally) another about his premonitions. He may try to cause the truth to reveal itself.

21. Orochi (Sea Serpent) - by Pat Gamblin

The orochi represents the power of the ocean at its worst.

Effect: When the ise zumi calls on the power of the orochi he is filled with its unending aggressive might. The effects of the tattoo last for a number of Battle Turns equal to the ise zumi's School Rank. During that time the ise zumi's wound penalties are reduced by half his School Rank (round up) and he keeps one less die of damage from the battle table each turn. Using the tattoo in a skirmish counts as a single turn of battle. This tattoo may be used once per day.

Cost: After the duration runs out or the battle ends, the ise zumi immediately takes damage equal to (# of Battle Turns used)k1 as the strain catches up with his mortal body. He must also rest (no more than low activity) for as many hours as the tattoo was used.

22. Pearl - by Jay Wrobel

The pearl is the symbol of knowledge. It is said that each of the Dragons has a pearl within them that gives them their wisdom.

Effect: School Rank times per week, an Ise Zumi with this tattoo can temporarily gain all Lore skills at a rank equal to his School Rank by meditating for an hour. This effect lasts for one hour.

Cost: While the ise zumi is filled with the wisdom of a Dragon, he is emptied of the compassion of Man. His Awareness drops to 1 and he acts as if he had the Insensitive disadvantage and the Heartless advantage. Only cold, pure logic can move the ise zumi during this period.

23. Plum Blossom (Spiritual Nourishment)

The sacred flower of the Togashi family, the Plum Blossom remains as mysterious as the ise zumi themselves.

24. Peony Blossom - by Shiba Toma

The peony is a hardy flower known for frequently growing twin blossoms.

Effect: Once per day the ise zumi may split into a pair of identical twins for a number of turns equal to his School Rank + 1. Only clothing is duplicated, with other items being randomly divided between the twins. Both twins may take actions independently of the other, and share the character's void points. All injuries to either twin are applied to the ise zumi when they merge.

Cost: The peony plant, while beautiful, often takes several years to blossom for the first time. The ise zumi must wait 10 - School Rank rounds after activating the tattoo before its effect begins. He may take actions as normal while waiting for peony to blossom. Once called upon it cannot be stopped from 'twinning' the monk.

25. Pomegranate

As of yet I have not discovered the secret of the pomegranate, symbol of the Agasha family.

26. Saya (Empty Sheath) - by Sir Callan

The tattoo of the empty sheath represents a desire for peace and non-conflict.

Effect: When the tattoo is activated in combat, all opponents will ignore the ise zumi for a number of turns equal to the ise zumi's School Rank. This effect immediately ends if the ise zumi declares an attack. This ability may be used once per day. The tattoo also has a permanent benefit: the ise zumi does not have to raise to attempt to disarm an opponent of equal or lower School Rank.

Cost: The ise zumi may never willingly initiate a fight. When he does enter combat his desire to still see a peaceful resolution will cause his attacks to always resolve at the end of the turn. He still declares his action in the order dictated by initiative.

27. Scroll - by Jay Wrobel

The ways of the kami are written upon the scrolls of the shugenja. To the uninitiated these scrolls are gibberish. Rokugan's shugenja recognize them as the wisdom from the gods.

Advantage: An ise zumi with this tattoo receives the Elemental Attunement advantage, but senses the presence of magic with their Void instead of Awareness. The ise zumi also gains the Spellcraft Skill at a rank equivalent to their School Rank. This skill cannot be increased with experience points.

Cost: The ise zumi becomes quite infatuated with magics of all sorts. He gains the Fascination (magic) disadvantage and all shugenja interacting with him roll an extra die on social rolls.

28. Tessen (Iron Fan) - by Jay Wrobel

As the courtier's fan rules the court, so the iron fan rules the battlefield. With it armies are moved and tactics unveiled.

Effect: This tattoo allows the ise zumi to add or subtract his School Rank as a modifier on the Battle Table and may use Void instead of Water for Battle tests. Also, he may declare his level of engagement after advantage has been determined.

Cost: The tessen demands constant learning of tactics and strategy. A tessen-tattooed ise zumi may not increase a skill to a higher rank than his Battle skill. Also, he will never remain neutral while a battle is taking place. While in battles the ise zumi may only gain Glory as a result of Heroic Opportunities, as the ise zumi declines recognition for any lesser deeds.

29. Waterfall - by Chunkai 'Kevin'

A Waterfall is a place for contemplation and cleansing. By sitting under the waterfall, a man will be constantly cleansing himself of impure thought.

Effect: By activating this tattoo, the ise zumi can increase his own self-awareness. Whenever he contemplates a question or puzzle, he can raise his Intelligence by his School Rank in regards to contemplating the problem.

Cost: The tattooed man will strive for physical purity and well as mental. The ise zumi cannot stand a single stain on himself or his personal clothing. If he is not physically clean, he cannot contemplate other problems.

30. White Stag (Symbol of the Hantei)

This tattoo remains so rare that no one has presented evidence of its true purpose.

BONUS TATTOOS

Spider-web - inspired by Sir Callan's 'Ivy'

Effect: The ise zumi is able to use his chi to bind up a target, holding them in place. This has a range of line of sight. His target is allowed to make a Contested Roll of Water vs. the ise zumi's Water + School Rank to avoid being entangled. If the ise zumi is successful in binding the opponent, the target may take no actions and is considered to have a TN of 5 to be hit. Each turn the target may repeat the contested roll in an attempt to escape. The total amount of time the ise zumi may maintain a hold on a target per day is a number of turns equal to his School Rank + 1. This may be divided into several short uses or expended in one long effort.

Cost: It takes the ise zumi 5 - School Rank rounds to weave his 'web'. During that time and while holding the target, the ise zumi's own TN to be hit is 5 due to the intense focus required.

Tornado - by Shiba Toma

Effect: The ise zumi has been emblazoned with the very essence of the destructive power of the air. It takes one turn to invoke the power of this tattoo (the ise zumi is considered to have declared Full Defense while doing so if in combat). While under the influence of the tornado, the ise zumi keeps an additional number of dice on his Kaze-do skill rolls equal to his school rank. This effect lasts for a number of minutes equal to his school rank and may be invoked school rank times per day.

Cost: While infused with the power of the tornado the bushi must wander about almost randomly, moving at at least a fast walk. In combat he must change targets every turn, or forego attacking every other turn if only one opponent remains.

Turtle - By Shiba Toma

Effect: The turtle holds the secrets of deep resilience. When the ise zumi is filled with this power, he gains additional Wounds per Wound Rank equal to his School Rank. These extra wounds are the first to be taken from each Wound Rank, and are removed when the power of the tattoo recedes. Wounds taken prior to the activation of the tattoo are never healed by this effect. It takes one turn to invoke the power of this tattoo (the ise zumi is considered to have declared Full Defense while doing so if in combat). The power takes effect on the ise zumi's action as determined by initiative rolls for that turn. This effect lasts for a number of minutes equal to his School Rank and may be invoked School Rank times per day.

Cost: The turtle is resilient but far from swift. While under the effects of the tattoo the ise zumi always declares his action first and resolves it last.

My thanks to all the participants. This has been a fun project for me. :)

Lastly, a new ancestor has come to my attention.

Shiryo no Kaze (5 CPs, Dragon only, Ise Zumi may purchase this ancestor)

It was the monk Togashi Kaze who created the art of Kaze-do. He spent his life giving the peasantry the tools to defend themselves from the excesses of the samurai class. After a decade of teaching his new fighting methods to the peasantry and his fellow ise zumi, he was called into an audience with Hantei the Third. He refused to demonstrate the art with which he had disarmed and defeated scores of samurai. He died refusing to defend himself from the emperor's desires.

Togashi Kaze's blood descendants and spiritual inheritors have a gift for his essential method: "Killing is for the Cruel." Kaze's descendant receives two free raises for any attempt to disarm while he himself has no weapon. Kaze's descendant also receives the Soft Hearted disadvantage, though he would never think of it as a disadvantage.