



2 Rules/behavior for daily life/Customs

2-9 Ceremonial occasions

People in Japan hold ceremonies known as *kei-cho* (*kei* stands for congratulation, *cho* for condolence) for special occasions which are collectively called *kan-kon-so-sai*: *kan* stands for turning points of life such as birth and coming of age, *kon* stands for marriage and wedding, *so* stands for funeral and memorial ceremony, and *sai* stands for annual celebrations such as New Year's Day, mid-summer Bon Festival, July 7 Tanabata Festival and Shichigosan (literally meaning "seven-five-three," for celebrating children's growth). Among these, *kon* and *so* ceremonies in particular have many rules and practices to be observed. You may feel more comfortable about these by asking for a brief explanation from older Japanese acquaintances.

When a close friend is having a celebratory event such as marriage, birth, employment or entrance to school, there is a custom for you to present goods or money. For giving money, you put it inside a special envelope called *shugi-fukuro*.

When attending funerals, men wear black suits, white shirts and black ties. Women also usually wear black. For sending money, you put it inside a special envelope called *fushugi-fukuro* and hand to the receptionist. Details for funerals and weddings can vary depending on the religion, so it is best to seek advice from people familiar with the ceremonials.

| Kinds of ceremony | Meaning and content | Rules and practices |
|-------------------|---|---|
| Kan | Turning points of life such as birth and coming of age | There is a custom to present goods or money to a close friend having a celebratory event. Gift money is put inside a special envelope called <i>shugi-fukuro</i> . |
| Kon | Marriage and wedding | There is a custom to present goods or money to a close friend at marriage. Gift money is put inside a special envelope called <i>shugi-fukuro</i> . |
| So | Funeral and memorial ceremony | When attending funerals, men wear black suits, white shirts and black ties. Women also usually wear black. For sending money, put it inside a special envelope called <i>fushugi-fukuro</i> and hand to the receptionist. |
| Sai | Annual celebrations such as New Year's Day, Bon Festival, Tanabata Festival and Shichigosan | |

* Details can vary depending on the religion and the region