

Chapter 14	Appropriate Gifts for Occasions of Congratulations and Condolences	
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During the transaction between business entities, exchanges for congratulatory and condolence messages are indispensable. In this chapter, we will learn the common culture and manners for sending messages on such occasions.

1. Congratulatory Occasion

A congratulatory occasion is usually a happy celebration. Weddings, birth of a baby, school entrances and graduations are included in this category. These events are turning points in one's life. Business entities follow the same culture as human life. Business companies have "personality," which legally is expressed as "entity." It bears legal rights and obligations.

The following are comparisons of customs for congratulatory occasions between businesses and personal relationships.

▼Difference of 'in business' and 'in personal'

Congratulatory customs in business relations	Congratulatory ceremonies in personal relationships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ceremonies and parties to celebrate anniversaries etc. • Celebrating an inauguration or completion of the headquarter/new plant building construction. • Announcement of a new store branch or shop. • Longevity ceremony for the founder of the company. • Conferment of awards. etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weddings. • Conferment of awards. • Winning prizes. • Promotions and inaugurations. etc.

Such occasions need to be addressed by the company, and a good chance for you to put into practice what you have learned in the previous chapters, 【8 Handling phone calls 】 【9 How to take care of guests 】 【10 Basics for setting up an Event 】 【11 How to take care of guests 】 【12 Basics of business documents ②-Exercise- 】 【13 Basics of business correspondence 】 .

You now know how to work utilizing skills like information, communication, and

teamwork that you have learned in previous chapters.

Shift your knowledge to action and you will do your job with confidence.

1. 1 Ways of processing major happy events.

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Q 1 : Hosting

This is your first year of being employed in the general affairs department at Yamakawa Construction Material Ltd. The company is going to celebrate the founder and Chancellor's 88th birthday (Mr. Keichi Yokoyama, date of birth: October 20th). At the board meeting, a board member representative proposed that the company host a birthday reception for Mr. Yokoyama in November and invite their clients. The idea was agreed upon unanimously.

Mr. Yamada, the Chief Director of the general affairs department and a member of the management's operating committee, appointed Mr. B (staff with 5 years of experience), Mr. C (staff with 3 years of experience), and you Mr. A to administer the reception.

Mr. B is appointed as subleader (practical leader on the site) to instruct the preparation for the party.

Y : Yesterday

T : Today

T : Tomorrow

Q2 : Participants

You are the first-year staff of the business department at Maiko Trading Company Ltd. You received a call from Mr. Yamakawa of Construction Material Ltd. Both companies have a good relationship since Construction Material Ltd. is a loyal customer to your own company. He noticed that Miyako Trading Company are planning to celebrate the 88th birthday of Mr. Eiichi Yokoyama, a founder and Counsellor of Yamakawa Construction Material Ltd.

Before they send the official invitation, they want you to inform the president of the your company and the director of the department about the event.

What would you start with? Answer the question with the **YTT method**.

Y : Yesterday

T : Today

T : Tomorrow

1.2 How to write a reply card.

Most invitations include a reply post card within the envelope, for the addressee to confirm their company's attendance. The reply must not be a simple answer of attendance, but should include words of respect and congratulate the host.

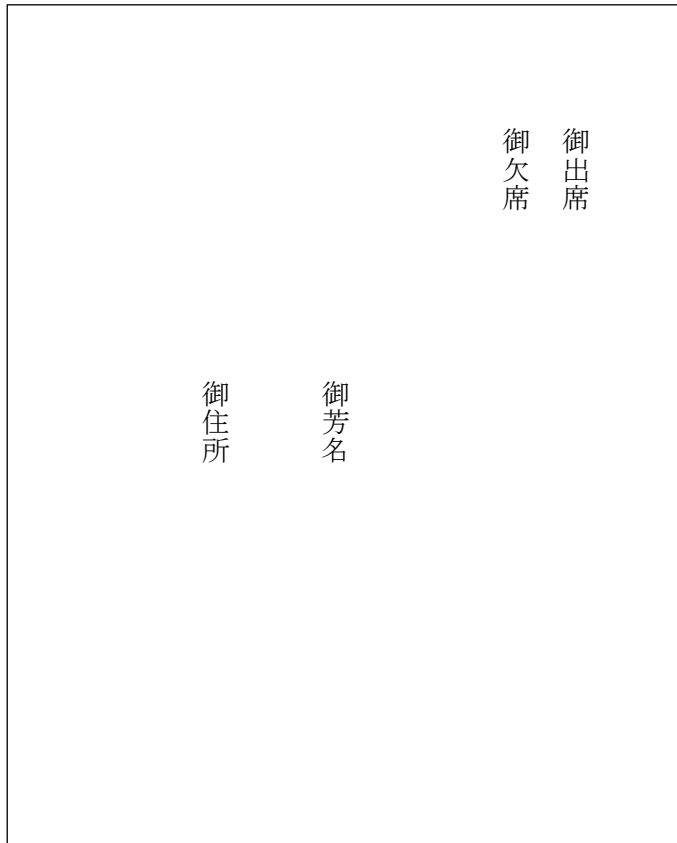
Q3 : In the case of participation of the participants of the previous work

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(As of 2020, postcards
Nationwide uniform 63 yen)

[◀Back▶](#)



◆Let's write a note.

1. 3 Words for Celebration Events

Terminology	Meaning
shugi (祝儀)	Ceremonies of celebration. Money and valuable gifts are given at the time of celebration.
Shugen (祝言)	Congratulatory speech for happy ceremonies such as weddings.
Norito (祝詞)	Words that a Shinto Priest chants while facing an altar during the Shinto Ritual.
Senbetsu (餞別)	Money and valuable gifts given as a farewell token to the person who will be transferred to another office branch.
Hokkinin (発起人)	Organizers. People who organize the events.
Shukuji • Shaji (祝辞 • 謝辞)	Congratulatory speech.

2. Condolences

You are well aware that a ceremony appropriate for grief comes unexpectedly. You may not sufficiently know the customs and appropriate manners for such an occasion. However, you will want to behave properly without embarrassing yourself. You should act properly, using common sense and your knowledge of conventional manners.

Common manners differ from various traditions and conventions according to the regions and religions within which the events will take place. You need to be very careful and flexible when you deal with events that are meant for condolences. The following explanation will help you with such manners and customs based on Buddhist culture and tradition.

2. 1 Case of individuals

2.1.1 When you receive the notice

① Regardless of religion, it is natural to express your sincere feeling of condolence to the bereaved. You need to ask the date, time, and place of the funeral along with the format for the wake. If it is not decided yet, ask the host to let you know as soon as the details are finalized.

② Ask them whether you can be of any help to them. While preparing for the funeral and other rituals, the bereaved family are extremely busy. They may not even have time to have grieve. It will be a great help for them if you volunteer to pass the information of the funeral to the necessary people on behalf of the bereaved.

▼Funeral Services (Wake, Funeral, Farewell service)

Information to be confirmed	in detail
Time, date and cause of the death	
Time and place of vigil, funeral and farewell ceremony	
Formality of the funeral	
Information about the chief mourner	
Gathering the regulations for the congratulatory and condolence events of your company.	

※It is necessary to check the “obituary notice” in the newspaper every day.

2.1.2 Condolatory visits

A condolatory visit is to meet the bereaved family and express your feeling of condolence. It is better to visit as soon as possible after hearing the news. No need to wear formal suits or dress for your immediate visit, but avoid wearing colorful clothing. You do not have to bring the SHUGIBUKURO (envelop with money) at this moment, but do not forget to bring it at the time of the funeral ritual (vigil or farewell ceremony). When you go do not stay long, only confirm the above information. If you are a relative or in close relation with the bereaved, ask them if there is anything you can help with and follow their instructions.

You can greet the deceased at the very last moment only when you are permitted, but you are not allowed to touch the body of the deceased. As the white cloth covering the body is lifted giving you a chance to meet the deceased, bow once bedside the coffin and join your hands in prayer. Then turn yourself around and bow to the bereaved family. If you are not able to visit, it is recommended to send a condolatory telegram to the family.

2.1.3 A vigil (tsuya, tsu-uya)

- ① Say a word of condolence at the reception, hand them the envelope containing money offering and write your name on the visitor’s list.

If there is no reception, say your word of condolence to the bereaved family, bow at the altar and place the offerings on the altar. This process may differ according to the religion.

- ② Enter the room where the altar is placed.
- ③ Then bow once and quietly go forward to the mourner or the bereaved family and give your condolences.

- ④ At the vigil (wake), a Buddhist priest recites a sutra.
- ⑤ When it ends/at half-way, the process of burning incense by the participants will follow. Usually, light dinner and drinks will be served after the wake. This is to show appreciation to the participants for their attendance and purify them after the vigil ceremony. When you are asked to stay for the dinner offered by the host, you should not decline the offer.
- ⑥ It will not be of any embarrassment even if you excuse yourself at any time during the dinner.

After some time, the host will make give short address and announce the closing of the dinner. Usually, it is appropriate to leave your seat then.

※Be aware that the procedure differs according to the religion.

2.1.4 Funeral and Farewell Ceremonies

A funeral is a ritual hosted by the bereaved family and those who were very close to him/her, intended as a space of praying for the deceased to be in repose. A farewell ceremony is a ritual hosted by friends and acquaintances to say good-bye to the deceased. Generally, funerals and farewell ceremonies are held as one unit, as one occasion. It is up to you to participate in both or either the funeral and the farewell ceremony according to the degree you held with the deceased. But if you were not close enough, you should attend the farewell ceremony, which we call KAISO(会葬).

Be aware that being late for the funeral or entering the room while the priest is still chanting the sutra is considered to be very rude. You should be seated at least 10 minutes before the start of every ceremony.

After the bereaved family has presented their farewell message, the coffin will be carried out. This will be the last occasion to see the deceased off. Some people may leave just after the incense burning, but it would be better for you to stay long enough to send off the coffin as it departs.

When the coffin is carried onto the hearse, you will bow in silence. Listen quietly to the greeting of the bereaved family. When the hearse starts to move, you should send off the car with your hands joined together in prayer.

2.1.5 Others

Global society makes it natural to have foreigners as your neighbors. Whatever religion you may believe, it is common to have practices in respect of the deceased. Therefore, you need to know the funeral ritual from different religions. If you are not familiar with the rituals from other religions, it is better to follow your own way joining your hands in

prayer.

Do not forget to show your respect to the deceased person in any way.

▼Comparison Between Rituals from Christian and Shinto

	Christian Style	Shinto Style
Dress code	same as that of Buddhism.	same as that of Buddhism.
Offering	<p>▼Catholic offering that can be used for buying flowers or to administer the Mass. 「お花料 (ohanaryou)」 「おミサ料 (omisaryou)」</p> <p>▼Protestant: 「お花料 (ohanaryou)」 offering that can be used for buying flowers</p> <p>▼ If you have no knowledge of which religion the funeral is administered: 「ご霊前(goreizen)」 (Do not use this for the funeral of an Evangelical Protestant. 「お花料(ohana ryou)」 (used commonly)</p>	<p>▼Offering to the soul of the deceased. 「御玉串料 (on tamagushi ryou) 「御榊料(on sakaki ryou)」 「ご霊前(goreizen)」</p> <p>▼Token of thanks to the Shinto Priest. 「御玉串料(on tamagushi ryou)」</p>
Participation in a vigil (wake)	Worship with flowers.	Worship with TAMAGUSHI HOUTEN (reverentially offering a branch of the sacred tree)
	<p>① When you about to offer a flower at the altar, first receive it with both hands. The stem should be placed towards your right-hand side. Hold the flower at the height of your chest horizontally and walk straight to the altar. Bow once.</p> <p>② When you come to the front of the altar, hold the flower with the bud's side pointing towards the altar. Then turn the flower 180 degrees clockwise and place the stem side facing the</p>	<p>① When you receive TAMAGUSHI (a branch of a sacred tree), place your right hand on the root side of the stem from above and hold the leaf side with your left hand from below. Bow once.</p> <p>② Turn TAMAGUSHI 180 degrees in your hands. Make sure that the leaf side is pointing toward you. Your left hand is now holding the root side from below and your right hand holding the leaf side from above. Offer the TAMAGUSHI with both</p>

	<p>altar.</p> <p>③ If you are a Catholic, cross yourself and bow once before the altar.</p> <p>④ Step back 2-3 steps, bow to the bereaved family and Father (catholic), or Priest (protestant).</p>	<p>hands to the Tamagushi stand.</p> <p>③ Step one foot back and make two bows to the portrait of deceased person. Clap your hand without making sound twice. Bow once and return to your seat.</p>
	<p>After the flower offering ceremony, you may be invited to dinner and drinks for the wake. Do not decline the offer. Be seated and have food and drinks together with the other participants. This is considered to be good manners.</p>	<p>After the Tamagushi offering, you may be invited to food and drinks for the wake. Do not decline the offer. Be seated and have some food and drinks together with the other participants. This is considered to be good manners.</p>
Participation in a funeral	<p>After the flower offering, you are expected to stay until the end of the funeral service.</p> <p>Usually, participants other than relatives will leave the funeral after sending off the hearse.</p>	<p>After the Tamagushi offering, you are expected to stay until the end of the funeral service.</p> <p>Usually, participants other than relatives will leave after sending off the hearse.</p>

◆Terminology for Funeral Ceremonies

Term	Meaning of the term
kyounen (享年)	The age at which the person died.
kaisousha (会葬者)	Participants of the funeral.
mis・sou (密葬)	Funeral carried out only by the bereaved family.
kouden (香典)	Money offered to the spirit of the deceased.
sonae mono (供物)	Things offered to God and Buddha. Buddhist way, Shinto way
imikotoba (忌みことば)	Ominous words that should not be used at funeral.
moshou (喪章)	A black band, ribbon, or cloth worn to express sorrow for the deceased.
choumon (弔問)	Visitation to the bereaved family to express one's feeling of condolence.
fukumo (服喪)	A certain time or duration where the bereaved family refrains from public appearance or ostentatious attitude.
mochu (喪中)	A certain time or duration where the bereaved family go into mourning.
moshu (喪主)	A host for the funeral.

houyou (法要)	An event to pray for the happiness of the deceased in the next world.
hatsunanoka (初七日)	7 days after death. The ceremony commemorating the 7 th day of the death.
fuse (布施)	Money offered to the Buddhist priest who administered the funeral or a commemorative event. OFUSE is also a word used to refer to the envelope containing the monetary offerings.
koudenkaeshi (香典返し)	Sending gifts in return for the monetary offerings.
moake (喪明け)	The end of the duration where the bereaved refrain from public appearance.
meifuku (冥福)	Wishing for the happiness of the deceased in the next world.

3. NOSHI(熨斗)and(MIZUHIKI 水引)

The custom of giving gifts comes from the rituals of celebration and funeral. Originally, the gifts were wrapped in washi (Japanese paper) and MIZUHIKI was used to tie around the paper. MIZUHIKI is made of washi and twisted to make a thin rope-form string treated with water paste to prevent it from loosening. The original color used was white, which symbolizes sacred and purity.

NOSHI is tied to decorate the envelope that encloses money (SHUGIBUKURO). Alternatively, ribbon design printed on paper is called Noshi Paper, used to make the envelope. The origin of NOSHI and Noshi envelope can be traced back to the tradition of tying the wrapped and dried abalones, using layers of white washi and red washi with MIZUHIKI (Japanese paper strings). These wrapped abalones were used as an accessory to accompany the valuable gifts for celebration.

As time passed, it became common tradition in society for the accompanying NOSHI to be wrapped with WASHI. Later, the tradition was simplified which became the form of what are used today.

The SHUGIBUKURO (an envelope to put money in) which we find nowadays at stationary stores is a simplified NOSHI called “ORINOSHI” (folded noshi). After Meiji Restoration, the custom of giving gifts to others became common, even among the ordinary people. In the late Taisho period, along with the development of printing technology, Noshi paper and Noshi envelope that had the NOSHI design printed on it became widely popular.

On the other hand, even if abalone is dried and pressed, originally it is a fresh shellfish. Therefore, if you intend to bring fresh food as a gift, the use of NOSHI is avoided. We do not use NOSHI when your gift is for the purpose of condolence, visit to the hospital, or to console a disaster.

You may wonder the appropriate number and color for the MIZUHIKI that will be used. Basically, MIZUHIKI (string) should be used by combining odd numbers.




This idea of “5 vital energies” in the universe being the basic elements of nature originated from the ancient Chinese teaching of “Yin and Yang Principles.” Influenced by this idea, 5 is the basic number for NOSHI. They are usually five strings combined together for its tying method.

To make a tie, 3 strings (instead of 5) are also used as a simplified form. 7 strings are considered to express courteousness. 10 strings—although it is categorized as even number— it signifies double of the 5 strings and used for wedding gifts showing gorgeousness and fulfillment. However, the use of 9 strings is avoided since the pronunciation of “9” has the same sound as “KU” (suffering) in Japanese.

While selecting the color of the NOSHI (string), a combination of red and gold, red or white, or gold alone is used to tie the envelope for congratulatory events. Indigo blue, silver, or a combination of yellow and silver are used for condolence events. Sometimes, NOSHI could even be intentionally omitted for condolence occasions.

The design of the MIZUHIKI follows several rules according to the use as shown below.

◆ Example of Mizuhiki knot

Celebration	red-white/Bowknot	
	gold-silver/Knotting	
Condolence	black-white or silver/Knotting	

When you do not understand the rule, you can naturally search the information in books and by other means, but the most important and useful way is consulting elderly persons around you and learn from them the appropriate ways that suit the local and social tradition alongside the company’s convention.

4. Exchange of Gifts

Customarily, in Japan we exchange gifts twice a year. In the summer, we send OCHUGEN (summer gift), and in the winter we send OSEIBO (winter gift). These are tokens of gratitude for the people to whom you want to express your appreciation. However, this is not a mandatory custom. Nowadays, departments compete with each other to gain

customers by adopting the method of booking gifts in advance. They also show themselves to be eco-friendly (CSR) by simplifying the kinds of wrappings used. Let us here think about the true meaning behind the custom of exchanging gifts.

Who are you going to send these gifts to? They are those to whom you want to express your appreciation: parents and relatives, seniors at your company, clients, a wedding go-between, masters and teachers. There are some companies and business organizations which refuse to receive the gifts given only as a formality. In many cases, school teachers and doctors will not accept personal gifts.

Originally, exchanging of gifts is a sign of thoughtfulness and care towards others. Sometimes it may be necessary to think of something other than just giving gifts. Basically, you should directly give the gift yourself with some words of gratitude. It is convenient nowadays to use post mail and parcel delivery services to send your gift. If you are going to use a delivery service, you should not forget to send a short message of appreciation and a notice that you have sent a small gift which will arrive in a few days. Thus, you show your thoughtfulness towards others through this custom of exchanging gifts.

However, you need to remember some rules: OCHUGEN (summer gift) should be sent early July to mid-July. OSEIBO (winter gift) should be sent mid-December to the end of December. If you missed the appropriate timing for OCHUGEN, you should change the title OCHUGEN to SHOCHU OMIMAI "Season's greetings". If you are sending the gift later than August the 8th, it should be changed to ZANSHO OMIMAI. If you are going to send OSEIBO after the new year day, has passed it should be changed to ONENGA "A New Year's Greetings."

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◆ Case Study

You receive the following instruction from your boss: “The managing director of KADOBENI BUSSAN passed away. Since he was closely related to me both privately and officially, I will participate in his vigil tonight. Please prepare condolatory money for me to bring.”

Please discuss among your group what process you should follow.

◆ Participation Answer with ○/× to the following quizzes.

1 : Can you attend the event with your everyday clothes if you get the instruction - “Please come with casual clothes”.	
2 : You can take your coat and belongings into the banquet room.	
3 : You may take a sip of the drink you were handed at the entrance of the banquet room before the toast.	
4 : You were given an honorary ribbon, you should wear it until you leave the room.	
5 : You came late, you do not need to go to the host and apologize.	
6 : If you need to leave the party before it ends, you need to greet the host and excuse yourself.	
7 : At a buffet party, you should fill your plate with food before it gets scarce.	
8 : Introduce yourself to the people who are sitting at your table.	

【Post-learning task】

- ◆ Describe in more than 300 characters what you should be careful about in the manners of ceremonies and condolences.

【Pre-learning task】

- ◆ Describe what is needed to respond to the global society in more than 200 characters, including the content of this class.