

The History of Oharame

The Ohara region once supplied much of Kyoto's firewood. Local men would travel to the city pulling handcarts laden with firewood. The women, known as Oharame, would travel with them, carrying firewood on their heads. The bundles weighed as much as 60 kilograms and were cushioned by a circle of woven straw. They would be traded in the city for items that were difficult to obtain in Ohara, such as fresh fish. This practice started in the Muromachi period (1336–1573) and continued into the Meiji era (1868–1912), when gas became available for heat and lighting in the city.

Oharame typically wore a special kimono with tight sleeves and excess fabric above the waist. These were shorter than traditional kimono, ending at the knees for maximum comfort and mobility. The women also wore leggings and woven straw sandals.

At the annual Oharame Festival, women dress in period clothing and follow a two kilometer route from Jakko-in Temple to Sanzen-in Temple. Traditional clothing is available to rent for anybody attending the Oharame Festival.