

## **Mt. Kodake Trails**

**Distance:** Between 2.5 and 3 kilometers

**Duration:** 1.5 to 2 hours (one way)

The trail to the summit of Mt. Kodake (1,042 m) is an old logging road. Originally there was only one trail (the Old Kodake Trail), which began near the creek and across from the shelter. Now the overgrown logging road starting near the parking lot has been made into the main trail up Mt. Kodake (the New Kodake Trail). The new trail follows the old logging road for about 900 meters before turning off onto a dirt hiking trail. Both the new and old trails go through an old-growth beech forest before joining 800 meters from the summit. About 300 meters after the paths converge, the trail emerges from the tree line, opening upon a panoramic view of the Shirakami Sanchi Protected Zone.

The old trail passes along a creek and among many large beeches, including one heavily branched tree nicknamed the “Thousand-armed Kannon” for its resemblance to the multi-armed avatar of the bodhisattva of compassion. Some of the beech trees along both trails have distinctive claw marks. These are the traces of foraging by Asian black bears that climb the trees in search of nutritious beechnuts. Lucky observers might also spot a *kumadana*, or “bear-shelf,” a temporary platform of branches made by the bears to sit on while they eat the beechnuts.