

Hogan Keyaki Tree

After passing Yonjusanman Falls, take a few steps uphill from the longer of the two walking paths in Kikuchi Gorge to reach the towering Hogan Keyaki, a zelkova (*keyaki*) tree that grows on top of a massive boulder. The tree's thick roots, clinging to the volcanic rock like a giant's fingers, have become almost completely exposed due to erosion. Water flowing down the mountainside has slowly washed away the soil around the boulder, leaving the tree perched on it several meters above the ground.

Zelkova trees are traditionally believed to possess a mystical energy because they are hardy and can grow very large on relatively little nutrition. Particularly impressive specimens, such as the Hogan Keyaki, were often thought to be the abode of divine spirits.