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Ancient cedar in Kagoshima to form sister relationship with huge NZ tree

Tane Mahuta, the kauri tree that will become a sister tree of the Jomon Sugi.
(Photo courtesy of the New Zealand Tourism Board)

An ancient cedar tree on Yakushima Island, a UNESCO World Heritage site in Kagoshima Prefecture, is set to form a sister relationship with a tree in New Zealand believed to be more than 1,000 years old.

On Thursday, a ceremony will be held to form the tie-up between the Jomon Sugi tree on Yakushima and New Zealand's Tane Mahuta kauri tree.

The sister-tree relationship is part of a project launched by the New Zealand Tourism Board. By linking large and ancient trees, officials hope to spread a culture of forest preservation.

Tane Mahuta is located in the Waipoua Forest sanctuary on New Zealand's North Island. The kauri tree belongs to the Araucariaceae family of conifers. It is 51 meters tall and has a trunk girth of 13.8 meters. It is believed to be between 1,200 and 2,500 years old. Its name comes from the Maori for "god of the forest."

The Jomon Sugi, which is the first ancient tree to join the family under the project, is 25.3 meters tall and has a girth of about 16.4 meters. Some theories say it is as many as 7,200 years old.

The signing ceremony will be held in front of Tane Mahuta on Thursday. Yakushima Mayor Tonaō Hidaka will be present at the ceremony along with New Zealand officials from the Far North and Kaipara districts.