

Records document silver mining in northern Hyogo Prefecture a thousand years ago, and some sources make it as early as 807 CE. The town of Yakatamachi prospered as a post town for travelers journeying between the northern mines and the port of Himeji as far back as the 1600s. During the Edo Period (1603–1867), the town was controlled by the shogunate, Japan's military government. Silver from the mines was transported mainly on foot, its carriers guarded by samurai. Because of the silver's importance, government officials often visited the town to check its security. In 1876, a project was launched by the new Meiji government to modernize the Ikuno mine and the road that connected it to the Shikama-tsu warf in Himeji. They built the Silver Mine Carriage Road (the Ikuno Kozanryo Bashamichi, now known as the Gin no Bashamichi), a macadam road that made possible the transport of silver by horse-drawn carriage.

At its peak, Yakatamachi had eight inns: two for government officials (*goyoyado*) and six for commoners (*ippanyado*). It also had seven sellers of alcohol, four money-lenders, and a variety of other shops selling daily goods. None of the buildings from its days as a post town remain today, but visitors can still follow the course of the old road through town.