

Mining at Mikobata has a history spanning over a 1,000 years. Along with the nearby mines in Akenobe and Ikuno, Mikobata produced silver and copper for centuries, reaching peak production during the last part of the nineteenth century. In 1919, with its ores exhausted, Mikobata was converted into an ore processing plant that became one of the largest in East Asia.

Raw ore from Akenobe was delivered by rail to the Mikobata plant, where it underwent a variety of physical and chemical separation techniques to concentrate the desired minerals in powder form. Once isolated, the powdered copper, zinc, and tin were shipped elsewhere for smelting.

The processing plant closed in 1987. Some of it was demolished in 2004, but the concrete foundations and “thickeners,” huge cement funnels that condensed waste water, still stand.