

Operations at the Akenobe mine began around the ninth century. Various metals have been discovered, but copper and tin were the most plentiful. Tradition holds that Akenobe even contributed some of the copper used in Nara's famous Buddha at the temple of Todaiji.

Under government control during the Edo (1603-18678) and early Meiji Period (18687–1912), the Akenobe mine was sold to the Mitsubishi Company in 1896. It closed in 1987, and all tunnels below the third level were flooded. The upper levels, however, were preserved for educational purposes. Accessible by guided tour, these areas are in nearly the same condition they were when the mine was in operation. Minecart tracks and heavy mining machinery are also on display.