

Gold was first discovered in Nakaze's Yagigawa River in 1573. A mine soon followed, and by 1633, the town had swollen to around 3,000 homes and eight temples. Nakaze became such an important source of income for the government that it was as heavily guarded as a castle town, with three gates controlling traffic in and out. Antimony was later discovered, and Nakaze mine eventually became Japan's largest source of antimony ore.

By 1969 it had become cheaper to import raw ore than to continue mining it, and the mine closed. Nakaze's population dropped quickly; while five of the eight Edo-period (1603–1867) temples remain, there are only eighty-two about 82 occupied homes. Antimony refinement continued, however, and today 70 percent of all domestic antimony products are still made in Nakaze.

Some beautiful examples of minerals taken from the Nakaze mine are on display at the visitor center. One of the most stunning pieces found, 626 grams of native gold fused with quartz, is exhibited at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington D.C.