

# News Release

July 24, 2024  
Proterial, Ltd.

## Kaoru Horio, Employee of Proterial Yasugi, Ltd., Appointed *Murage* of Nittoho Tatara Steelmaking

On July 18, 2024, Kaoru Horio, an employee of Proterial Yasugi, Ltd. (Headquarters: Yasugi-shi, Shimane; CEO: Ichiro Kishigami; 100% owned by Proterial, Ltd.), was appointed *murage* (master) of Nittoho Tatara steelmaking by the Society for Preservation of Japanese Art Swords.

Proterial, Ltd., has been supporting Tatara steelmaking by the Society for Preservation of Japanese Art Swords, or Nittoho, since 1977 (as Hitachi Metals, Ltd., at the time). Through this support, we are aiming to pass on the techniques and culture of Tatara steelmaking, which is the basis of the current method adopted by the main plant of Proterial, Ltd., Yasugi Works. On July 18, 2024, Kaoru Horio from Proterial Yasugi, Ltd. was appointed Nittoho Tatara *murage*.

Kaoru Horio joined YSS Service, Ltd. (now Proterial Yasugi, Ltd.) in 1989. In 1993, he started working at the company's Torikami charcoal pig-iron making factory, also known as the site of Nittoho Tatara steelmaking, and there he started his Nittoho Tatara practical training. Horio trained under the late Akira Kihara, a former *murage*, and has been engaged in Tatara steelmaking ever since. Horio became an acting *murage* in 2014, and went on to devote himself to acquiring knowledge and experience of Tatara steelmaking. Now, he has been appointed *murage* by Nittoho. He will also be recognized as a holder of a Selected Conservation Technique, *tamahagane* production (*tatara-buki*), by the Agency for Cultural Affairs. Given the fact that Kaoru Horio has become a Nittoho Tatara *murage*, Proterial, Ltd. wishes to support the succession of Tatara techniques and culture more than ever.

### Comment from Kaoru Horio

“I am honored to have been appointed *murage* of Nittoho Tatara, with their long history of steelmaking. Even though I feel I still have a long way to go in terms of technique, I will diligently work to fulfill my responsibilities as a *murage*, trying to reach a level equivalent to my predecessors, including the late Mr. Kihara, my mentor and former *murage*. In Tatara steelmaking, a *murage* is required to have a wide range of skills, such as the abilities to examine raw materials and ensure material procurement. A *murage*'s steelmaking skills determine the quality of *Tamahagane*. As a Nittoho Tatara *murage*, I will work to develop my energy, stamina, and most importantly, mental strength to fulfill my duties, and continue to pass on our traditional techniques in cooperation with the *murage* trainees.”



Photo: Kaoru Horio engaged in Nittoho Tatara steelmaking

### Proterial, Ltd.

Toyosu Prime Square, 5-6-36 Toyosu, Koto-ku, Tokyo 135-0061, Japan  
[www.proterial.com/e](http://www.proterial.com/e)

## What is Tatara?

Tatara is an ancient Japanese steelmaking method. It is used to produce *tamahagane* steel—a material essential to Japanese swords—out of iron sand and charcoal. In accordance with the Act on Protection of Cultural Properties, the Agency for Cultural Affairs has designated *tamahagane* production, also known as *tatara-buki*, as a Selected Conservation Technique (a skill identified as requiring conservation measures, among all those subject to conservation as cultural properties).

Yasugi Works' current method to produce Yasugi Specialty Steel was derived from this traditional Tatara method. The techniques and spirit of Tatara steelmaking have been developed and succeeded into the production of Yasugi Specialty Steel.

Nittoho Tatara has been promoted under the Society for Preservation of Japanese Art Swords.

## ■About PROTERIAL

# PROTERIAL

“Proterial” reflects the essence of our corporate philosophy, which consists of three elements: Mission: “Make the best quality available to everyone;” Vision: “Leading sustainability by high performance;” and Values: “Unflinching integrity” and “United by respect.” It combines “**pro-**” with the word “**material.**”

“Pro-” represents our “three pros”:

- **Professional — work that exceeds expectations**
- **Progressive — a spirit that keeps challenging**
- **Proactive — an enterprising attitude**

“Material” refers to the high-performance materials that our original technologies produce and underpinned by the three pros. With our focus on solving customer issues and bringing new levels of value, we promise to contribute to the realization of a sustainable society through the products and services that embody our philosophy.

## ■Proterial, Ltd. — Company Overview

Established: April 1956

Head office: Toyosu Prime Square, 5-6-36 Toyosu, Koto-ku, Tokyo 135-0061, Japan

Capital: 310 million yen (as of March 31, 2024)

Representative: Sean M. Stack

Representative Director, Chairman, President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

Sales revenue: 1,033.2 billion yen (Term ended March 2024)

History: 1910: Founded as Tobata Foundry Co.

1937: Merged with Hitachi, Ltd.

1956: Established separately as Hitachi Metals Industries, Ltd.

2023: Company separated from the Hitachi Group, and renamed from Hitachi Metals, Ltd. to Proterial, Ltd.

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