

News Release

September 16, 2026
Proterial, Ltd.

Supporting Aiba Corporation in Replicating Ancient Japanese Tatara Steelmaking

Proterial, Ltd. (hereinafter “Proterial”) will support Aiba Corporation (head office: Sanjo City, Niigata, hereinafter, “AIBA”) in replicating the ancient Japanese Tatara steelmaking method. AIBA is a processor and seller of Yasugi Specialty Steel. The company will replicate the ancient Tatara method at KOUBA no SAITEN (KOUBA FES 2026), an industrial tourism event that will be held in the Tsubame-Sanjo area and surrounding municipalities. From 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. on Saturday, October 3, 2026, AIBA will give a public demonstration of the ancient method. Specifically, this will involve the processes of inserting iron sand and charcoal into a clay furnace, destroying the furnace, and taking a *kera* (massive block of steel) out of it.

1. Background

Tatara refers to a traditional Japanese steelmaking method that uses iron sand and charcoal as its major materials. The Tatara steelmaking industry thrived in the San'in region, including Okuizumo, as the region was a center for producing high-quality iron sand and enjoyed rich forest resources. Since the Edo period, the local port of Yasugi (in Yasugi City, Shimane Prefecture) has prospered as a steel loading port for transportation by *kitamaebune* (northern-bound ships) to areas including the Tsubame-Sanjo area.

However, in the Meiji period, cheap steel began to be imported and domestically produced following the start of modern steelmaking. Driven by a sense of urgency, a group of entrepreneurs involved in Tatara steelmaking established Unpaku-Steel Limited partnership in 1899, which is the origin of the main plant of Proterial, the Yasugi Works. Unpaku-Steel shipped *kera*, *tamahagane* (high-grade steel) and *rentetsu* (cutlery steel) made using the Tatara steelmaking method to destinations across Japan. It also started to do business with a hardware wholesaler that was the predecessor of AIBA.

Up to date, Proterial, related parties in the Tsubame-Sanjo area, and AIBA have developed the mutual relationships they built on Tatara steelmaking for many years of their histories. Against this backdrop and in agreement with KOUBA no SAITEN's objective of presenting the attractiveness of manufacturing, Proterial decided to support AIBA in replicating the ancient Tatara method (approved by the Society for Preservation of Japanese Art Swords) at the event.

2. Replication of the ancient Tatara steelmaking method

- (1) Date and time: 9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Saturday, October 3, 2026 (Open to the public)*

*The demonstration of the processes of destroying the furnace and taking the *kera* out of it will be given at around 4:00 to 5:00 p.m.

- (2) Place: Vacant land next to AIBA's head office (3203 Yada, Sanjo City, Niigata Prefecture)

- (3) Details: A mini-sized furnace similar to those made in the Nara period will be replicated for ancient Tatara steelmaking. Out of the entire process from building a clay furnace to the removal of the *kera*, a public demonstration will be given on the insertion of iron sand and charcoal into the furnace, the destruction of the furnace, and the removal of the *kera*.

Note: For the hands-on experience that will be provided as part of the demonstration, please visit the website of AIBA.

- (4) Support given by Proterial: Dispatch of people who will engage in the steelmaking and the provision of materials

Proterial, Ltd.

Toyosu Prime Square, 5-6-36 Toyosu, Koto-ku, Tokyo 135-0061, Japan
www.proterial.com/e



Insertion of iron sand and charcoal Destruction of furnace and removal of kera Kera (including tamahagane)
Photos from a past replication of the ancient Tatara steelmaking method

Media Inquiries: Corporate Communications Dept.

https://www.cntct.proterial.com/contact/publish/inquiry_eng?g=01&c=001-01

Customer Inquiries: <https://www.proterial.com/e/contact/>

(Reference)

KOUBA no SAITEN (KOUBA FES 2026)

URL: <https://kouba-fes.jp/>

Corporate profile of Aiba Corporation

Founded: 1861; current organization established in 1965

Head office: 3203 Yada, Sanjyo City, Niigata Prefecture

Capital: 40 million yen

Representative: Ryoji Aiba

Business description: Sale of custom-cut mold materials, sale of high-quality Yasugi Specialty Steel
as high-grade cutlery steel, and sale of processed molding steel

URL: <https://www.aiba-steel.co.jp/en/>

Yasugi Specialty Steel is a registered trademark of Proterial, Ltd.

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■About Proterial

PROTERIAL

The Thinking Behind our Company Name

“Proterial” combines “**pro-**” with the word “**material.**”

“Pro-” represents elements of our Values:

- **Unparalleled Professionalism**
- **Unbounded Progressiveness**
- **Unleashing Proactiveness**

“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

Founded : June 1910 (The current legal entity was formally established in April 2021.)

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

Capital : 1,000 million yen (as of July 1, 2026)

Representative : Sean M. Stack

Representative Director, Chairperson, President, & CEO

Sales revenue: 747.3 billion yen (Term ended March 2026)

History: 1910: Founded as Tobata Foundry Co.

1937: Merged with Hitachi, Ltd.

1956: Established separately as Hitachi Metals Industries, Ltd.

2023: Renamed from Hitachi Metals, Ltd. to Proterial, Ltd.

Proterial is a participant of the United Nations Global Compact and adheres to its principles-based approach to responsible business.

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