

FOREWORD

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Kawasaki Steel Corporation is both a steel producer and a maker of basic materials. Steel is the most popular and easiest to use of materials, but in addition to steel, Kawasaki Steel have also earned an outstanding reputation as a supplier of reinforced plastic, high density graphite, metal powder for metal injection molding (MIM), ceramic powders, and other materials. Because users require a variety of specific material characteristics, we are constantly seeking ways to increase strength, improve thermal and oxidation resistance, and meet the needs of complex product forms.

Approximately ten years have now passed since Kawasaki Steel became involved in new materials. During this period, remarkable progress has been made in technology, but while responding to today's needs for weight reduction, higher strength, and higher functionality, we have also put enormous effort into providing cost competitive products and recyclable materials.

In this special issue, it gives us great pleasure to present some of the fruits of our work. The papers contained in this issue cover basic and application technology for mesophase powder (KMFC) producible high density graphite for machine parts or electric discharge machining electrodes, metal powder for metal injection molding (MIM), and boron nitride (h-BN) for use as a high grade ceramic powder, particularly in cosmetics.

Although only a few of our many products can be included, this special issue also contains articles on stampable sheet (KP Sheet, glass fiber reinforced polypropylene), microfiber reinforcement (TIBREX), a water-reducing agent for concrete (KFLOW), and high purity iron oxide for use in high grade soft ferrite.

Each of these products fully responds to current trends toward energy saving and weight reduction. In the future, however, we will devote ourselves with even greater energy to technical research in these and similar areas. In closing, we welcome the comments of all our readers.