

<Company Overview>

Location	140-14 Yamatsuya, Ibogawa-cho, Tatsuno City, Hyogo Prefecture, Japan 671-1631
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URL	https://www.seiban.co.jp
Number of employees	(Non-consolidated) 278 (Group total) 323
Capital	JPY 45 million
Est.	1919
Representative	Takaaki Izumi, President & Representative Director

<Business Overview>

Manufacturing and sales of *randsel* schoolbags, related goods

<Technology>

Creating new standards for *randsel* schoolbags!

Snug fit of Seiban's "Tenshi-no-Hane" (Angel Wings) *randsel* schoolbags the bodies and hearts of all children



The *randsel* schoolbag, nicknamed "Tenshi-no-Hane (Angel Wings)" because of the shape of the resin board.

Seiban has manufactured *randsel* schoolbags for 73 years with the manufacturing technology it has developed since the company was founded in 1919. All of the *randsel* schoolbags for children are made with love using SEIBAN LIMITED's carefully, well-crafted manufacturing. Facing the challenge of finding the right balance of lightness and ease for carrying these bags, we hit upon the idea to raise the shoulder straps to reduce the perceived weight from our desire to improve the sense of stability and fit to create a *randsel* schoolbag that eased the load on children's bodies. Here, craftsmen devised a creative solution to insert plastic parts between the shoulder straps and looped ring at the back (metal fitting connecting the shoulder straps and the bag). The built-in plate raises the shoulder straps, lifting up the entire bag so that it fits snugly at the top of the child's back. This mechanism reduces the weight and stress on a child's shoulders and back.

Over a period of three years after this discovery, Seiban developed a plate made of resin material. The *randsel* schoolbag,

nicknamed “Tenshi-no-Hane (Angel Wings)” because of the shape of the resin board, became an instant hit because of its reputation for being easy to carry. We had a major break on our hands with this hit product the year following its release.

Since then, “Tenshi no Hane (Angel Wings)” has evolved steadily, not only in terms of enhanced functionality and durability, but also in its design and sense of quality. We expand and revamp our product lineup every few years. “Tenshi no Hane (Angel Wings)” continues to be loved as a bag made with the needs of every child in mind.

<Path to Development>

Inspired by his own experience in 2000 as he walked around with a heavy backpack when he was traveling around the 88 sacred places in Shikoku, Toshihiro Izumi, the former managing director of Seiban, came up with the idea of raising the shoulder straps on the *randsel* schoolbag. In order to raise the shoulder straps, we tested out various ideas through trial and error, including placing cardboard and steel plates in the shoulder straps, which culminated in the development of a resin part that will not break even if force is applied. “Tenshi no Hane (Angel Wings)” was conceived after three years of clearing a number of issues, including ensuring that the shoulder straps would be durable enough to not break and soft enough to be carried on the shoulders but with a stiffness that would still allow it to be sewn using a sewing machine.

<Originality>

Seiban’s *randsel* schoolbags are equipped with a number of basic child-oriented functions. One of these functions is a “tough, lightweight plate” The bag’s core material has been uniquely developed and is characterized by a strength and lightness that resists crushing even when pressure is applied. The use of a dual-structured core as the base for this tough, lightweight plate helps maintain durability and prevents the bag from losing its shape even if it is leaned against a wall. Another feature of these bags is a “tilt plate” that stabilizes the movement of textbooks. The sloping bottom constantly stabilizes the center of gravity by providing support so that textbooks rest against the back of the bag, which lightens the weight of the bag the child is carrying. All these specific functions come together to support a child through their six years at elementary school.

<Future Developments>

Although new and improved functions are added to “Tenshi no Hane (Angel Wings)” almost every year, the number of children enrolling in elementary school is falling due to lower birthrates, resulting in the inevitable shrinking of the market for schoolbags in Japan. For this reason, Seiban is developing a strategy to expand sales channels overseas. We are also planning to take up a new challenge in the childcare sector in collaboration with familiar, Ltd. in order to protect the children who will carry on the next generation and to give shape to our desire to make children happy in different ways.

<TOPICS>

Enduring “Heartfelt Manufacturing”

Seiban celebrating its centennial in 2019

Kamekichi Izumi, who was born in Tatsuno City, established Seiban in 1919 to produce bags, wallets, pipes and other items. In 2019, Seiban will celebrate 100 years since the company was founded. After the period of upheaval following WWII, Seiban began to produce schoolbags in earnest as they became popular. With the challenge of easing the stress on a child's shoulders and back, pursuit of lightweight bags, and the establishment of a production concept to meet the needs of customers, Seiban delivers products for children with increasingly enhanced designs and functionality. Going forward, Seiban will continue to take on the challenge of emphasizing the concept of "it takes a village to raise a child", including opening stores in major urban areas and developing business in areas other than schoolbags.

**Reasons for choosing "Tenshi no Hane (Angel Wings)": "Rests easily on shoulders and back and lasts for six years"
Winner of the Mothers Selection Award in 2017**

In 2017, the "Tenshi no Hane (Angel Wing)" *randsel* schoolbag won the 9th Mothers Selection Award (organized by the NPO Japan Mothers Association), a contest in which mothers who are raising children vote for products, services and facilities that they would like to try out and also recommend to other moms. The products, services or facilities with the most votes are selected for this award. In other words, this award is a testimony to the trust, understanding and favorable impression of our brand from mothers who are in the child-raising years. Going forward, Seiban will work to continue bringing smiles to the faces of children and their families as we closely follow the needs of our customers.

<History>

- 1919 Established Izumi Kamekichi Shoten in Osaka
- 1946 Established Seiban Hono Works
- 1973 Established SEIBAN LIMITED.
- 1982 Established 3I Co., Ltd. (sales subsidiary)
- 1986 Reorganized into SEIBAN LIMITED
- 2003 Launch of sales of "Tenshi-no-Hane (Angel Wings)" brand
- 2016 Merger of 3I Co., Ltd. and Matsuno Co., Ltd. to form Seiban Marketing Co., Ltd.
- 2018 Children's clothing brand, "familiar", and *randsel* schoolbag Seiban brand established a new company in childcare business