



KOUJI MIKI

Founder & Representative Director, enmono Co., Ltd.

Founder, Zen2.0

Founder, ZenSchool®

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PROFILE

Kouji Miki works at the intersection of Zen practice, innovation management, and artificial intelligence. For over twenty years he has advised small and medium-sized manufacturers in Japan, drawing on more than 250 factory visits to develop methods for surfacing the tacit knowledge held by craftspeople and founders. He is the creator of ZenSchool®, a Zen-based innovation program whose graduates include the engineer who built the first Japanese private rover to photograph the surface of the Moon and the founder of Japan's leading flying-car company. He is also co-founder of Zen2.0, which he launched at Kenchoji Temple in 2017 and which has since grown into the world's largest international conference on Zen and mindfulness. In November 2026 Zen2.0 marks its tenth consecutive year.

His current work centers on a long-running effort to make Kamakura a mindful city where Zen and technology meet. He has practiced Zen meditation for over fifteen years and Vipassana for over seven, and is a descendant of Saint Paul Miki, one of the 26 Martyrs of Japan.

AREAS OF EXPERTISE

- Generative AI and IKIGAI
- Zen philosophy and mindfulness in organizational and leadership contexts
- Zen-based innovation coaching for executives (ZenSchool® / True Innovation)
- Tacit knowledge elicitation and innovation management for manufacturing SMEs
- Metaverse and VR-based dialogue and retreat design

CURRENT ROLES

- **Representative Director**, enmono Co., Ltd. (2009–present)
- **Founder**, ZenSchool® (2011–present)
- **Founder and Co-representative**, Zen2.0 General Incorporated Association (2017–present)
- **Adjunct Lecturer**, Graduate School of Media and Governance, Keio University (2021–present)

zenschool® — METHOD AND ALUMNI OUTCOMES

A seven-month innovation program for founders and executives, launched in 2011 and now past its 65 cohort, with regional editions in Hamamatsu and Toyota City and international cohorts in English. Its premise is that the most defensible business ideas lie not in market research but in the founder's own buried desire. The program uses Zen-derived questioning, dialogue, and meditation to surface that desire and translate it into a product.

What its graduates have built is the evidence:

- **Shinichiro Nakajima**, CEO of Dymon Co., Ltd. (17th cohort, 2017), began designing the lunar rover **YAOKI** the summer after completing the program. On 7 March 2025 it reached the lunar surface aboard Intuitive Machines' IM-2 and transmitted images to Earth — the first Japanese private company to photograph the Moon. At 498 grams it is the world's smallest and lightest lunar rover, designed single-handedly across mechanics, electronics, and software.
- **Tomohiro Fukuzawa**, founder and CEO of **SkyDrive Inc.** (18th cohort, 2019), completed Japan's first crewed eVTOL flight in 2020 and flew public demonstrations of the SKYDRIVE at Expo 2025 in Osaka. The company has raised over ¥43 billion (approx. US\$290 million) from Suzuki, MUFG Bank, JR East and others, and targets commercial operation from 2028.
- **TechRound** (London) named two ZenSchool-led companies — SkyDrive and **Archelis Inc.**, maker of a powerless wearable leg-support exoskeleton — in its March 2024 list "10 Startups In Japan To Watch."

That ventures of this scale emerged from a program built on zazen and dialogue rather than market analysis is the central claim of Miki's work and of his book *True Innovation*.

Zen2.0 — TEN YEARS (2017–2026)

Zen2.0 began in 2017 as an act of gratitude. Having rebuilt his life through daily zazen after losing his job in the 2008 financial crisis, Miki and four friends set out to give something back to the Zen tradition that had sustained him. The first conference was held at Kenchoji Temple in Kita-Kamakura, organized by more than one hundred volunteers working in a teal, self-managing structure with no conventional hierarchy.

Ten years later, Zen2.0 is widely recognized as the world's largest international conference on Zen and mindfulness, bringing together speakers and audiences from management, science, religion, and the arts across Japan, Europe, and North America, both in person at Kenchoji and online. It has run without interruption for a decade, including through the pandemic years, when the conference moved online and expanded its international reach.

- **2017** — 1st edition. Japan's first international mindfulness conference, held at Kenchoji Temple with 100+ volunteers.
- **2018–2019** — 2nd and 3rd editions. Expansion of the international speaker program.
- **2020–2021** — 4th and 5th editions. Transition to online and hybrid formats, connecting audiences worldwide.
- **2022–2024** — 6th through 8th editions. Establishment as a recurring global gathering; the 2023 edition took as its theme the question of what is asked of human beings in the age of AI.
- **2025** — 9th edition.

- **2026 — 10th anniversary edition**, November 14–21 at Kenchoji Temple, held as part of **Mindful City Kamakura Week 2026** under the theme *Wa — The Resonance of All Things*. A week-long program extending the conference into the city itself, with exhibitors, temple venues, and civic participation across Kamakura.

SELECTED SPEAKING AND INTERNATIONAL ENGAGEMENTS

- **World Marketing Summit** (2024). Speaker, "AI and IKIGAI." The summit, founded by Philip Kotler, is broadcast across 105 countries.
- **Co-IDEATION Summit**, Stockholm, Sweden (March 2024). Invited speaker on "AI and Ikigai" at a future-of-work event with Microsoft as main sponsor.
- **Zen2.0**, Kamakura (2017–present). Host and speaker, annually.
- **Kamakura IKIGAI Retreat** (2026). Facilitator, with international participants from the UK, Israel, and elsewhere.
- **Mindful Ikigai in the AI Era**, Komyo-ji Temple, Kamakura (August 2026). Co-host with Cristina Ombra.

PUBLICATIONS

1. "Zen Wisdom: When the Ten Bulls Encountered the Inner Development Goals"

In *Inner Development Goals: Stories of Collective Leadership in Action, Volume 1 — From "I" to "We."* De Gruyter, 2025.

A chapter in the first English-language volume on the Inner Development Goals, published by De Gruyter, the German academic press founded over 270 years ago. The IDGs are a framework of twenty-three inner qualities and skills, organized in five dimensions, that support the achievement of the SDGs. Written as a work of storytelling, the chapter traces the founding and growth of Zen2.0 through the structure of the Ten Bulls, the classical Zen sequence of ox-herding pictures, and reads that journey against the IDG framework.

2. *True Innovation*

CCC Media House, June 2018. Commentary by Professor Takashi Maeno, Keio University Graduate School of System Design and Management.

An argument that genuine innovation originates in passion rather than logic. What a person actually wants to make — the desire that exists only in their own mind — is far more distinctive than anything market research produces, but it is typically obscured by social position and inherited assumption. The book sets out the dialogue method developed in ZenSchool, built on Zen questioning, for locating that buried excitement.

3. *Let's Start Micro-Monozukuri*

Ten Books, April 2013.

A practical guide to micro-manufacturing: a lean product development methodology for makers and small manufacturers, grounded in a Zen philosophical framework and making use of social media and crowdfunding.

TEACHING AND ACADEMIC WORK

- **Adjunct Lecturer**, Graduate School of Media and Governance, Keio University

(2021–present).

- **ZenSchool®** (2011–present). Founder and lead facilitator. See "ZenSchool — Method and Alumni Outcomes" above.
- Selected for the **Tonomachi Edge Well-Being Innovation Program** (advanced course), hosted by Keio University School of Medicine and Keio University Graduate School of System Design and Management (2017).
- Research interest: the elicitation of tacit knowledge in manufacturing, the SECI model, and the relationship between contemplative practice and innovation methodology, informed by 250–300 factory visits.

CAREER HISTORY

2026 — Zen2.0 tenth anniversary edition and Mindful City Kamakura Week (November, Kenchoji Temple).

2025 — YAOKI, built by ZenSchool graduate Shinichiro Nakajima, became the first Japanese private-sector rover to photograph the lunar surface (March). SkyDrive, led by ZenSchool graduate Tomohiro Fukuzawa, flew public demonstrations at Expo 2025 in Osaka. Contributed a chapter to *Inner Development Goals, Volume 1* (De Gruyter). Began building Contemplative AI. Zen2.0 ninth edition.

2024 — Two companies led by ZenSchool graduates named in TechRound's "10 Startups In Japan To Watch" (London, March). Invited to speak at the Co-IDEATION Summit in Stockholm (Microsoft as main sponsor) and at the World Marketing Summit, both on "AI and IKIGAI." Zen2.0 eighth edition.

2017 — Founded Zen2.0, Japan's first international conference on Zen and mindfulness, at Kenchoji Temple. ZenSchool selected for the Tonomachi Edge Well-Being Innovation Program.

2016 — ZenSchool expanded regionally with local editions in Hamamatsu and Toyota City. Featured in the 699th episode of TV Tokyo's *Gaia no Yoake*, on the resurgence of small factories.

2013 — Launched zenmono, a crowdfunding service for small and medium-sized manufacturers. Published *Let's Start Micro-Monozukuri*.

2011 — Launched ZenSchool, an innovation program for small and medium-sized companies.

2009 — Left NC Network Co., Ltd. Co-founded enmono Co., Ltd.

2007 — Appointed Director, NC Network Co., Ltd.

2000 — Joined NC Network Co., Ltd.

1997 — Received a Master's degree from the Graduate School of Media and Governance, Keio University. Resigned from Fujitsu Limited.

1992 — Graduated from Meiji Gakuin University, Faculty of International Studies. Joined Fujitsu Limited, Overseas Sales Division.

EDUCATION

- **Keio University**, Graduate School of Media and Governance — Doctoral program, coursework completed (2004)
- **Keio University**, Graduate School of Media and Governance — M.A., Strategic Management and Innovation Theory (1997)
- **Meiji Gakuin University**, Faculty of International Studies — B.A. (1992)
- **Shiba Gakuen High School** (1987)

CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICE

- Zen meditation — 15+ years of daily practice
- Vipassana meditation — 7+ years
- Omine Okugake shugendo pilgrimage (2026)
- Trail running and surfing, Kamakura

LANGUAGES

Japanese (native) | English (professional working proficiency)