

Statue of Chijiwa Miguel

Chijiwa Seizaemon Norikazu (1569–unknown), better known as Chijiwa Miguel, was the adopted son of Chijiwa Yamato no Kami Naokazu, a warlord of the Sengoku period (1467–1568). Along with Hara Martinho, Ito Mancio, and Nakaura Julian, Chijiwa was one of the Tensho Embassy, a group of four young men selected to travel to Rome to meet the pope as representatives of Christianity in Japan.

The young men set out in 1582, and met two popes—Gregory XIII and Sixtus V—in 1585, remaining in Rome for several years before returning to Japan in 1590. While they were away, Toyotomi Hideyoshi had passed an edict expelling the Christian fathers, and the nation had become increasingly hostile toward Christianity. Chijiwa was thought to have abandoned Christianity later in life, but the recent discovery of what appear to be rosary beads in his purported grave casts doubt on this assumption.

The statue depicts Miguel dressed in European clothes. The members of the Tensho Embassy received various European costumes as gifts from the Doge of Venice and other important people they met on their travels.