

FACT SHEET #4: Legendary Samurai – Taira Masakado

Taira Masakado was a provincial nobleman in the tenth century. In Masakado's day, the samurai were more likely to ambush rather than call for a fair fight and women and children were not spared. When circumstances forced him to battle with a jealous neighbour, he gained a respected victory. Others soon targeted him and again he was victorious.



As his success grew so did his ambition. He took the offensive and eventually assumed control of eight local government areas. When Masakado declared himself '*Overlord of Eastern Japan*', the Imperial Court responded to his challenge and had him killed by local rivals.

In death, Masakado continues to exert influence. The Japanese Ministry of Finance offices were built over his grave but in 1940, exactly 1000 years after his death, the buildings were ravaged by fire as a result of lightning. The Ministry was relocated to avoid further offending Masakado's spirit.

