

## **Keynote Lecture 1**

### **The god Okuninushi and the trifunctional system of the Indo-Europeans**

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The god Okuninushi is, without dispute, one of the protagonists of the Japanese mythology, narrated in the Kojiki and the Nihonshoki. It is recounted in the Nihonshoki that he himself once declared that it was by means of a broad spear which he had been using as a cane that he was able to be successful in his reign of the land. It is thus evident that this deity cherished above all things a large spear and that this implement, although it was obviously a weapon, was not utilized by this deity for piercing his enemies, but in order to stab instead the soil during the journey throughout the land he was governing. I intend to show that the spear in question was a tool representative of the third function of what Dumézil called the trifunctional system of the Indo-Europeans, and that it characterizes its possessor as a god illustrating typically that function in the Japanese mythology, whose structure, on the whole, is clearly trifunctional.