

Call for Articles:

On the Life and Work of

Gananath Obeyesekere

image Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/03/30/world/asia/gananath-obeyesekere-dead.html>

Polity magazine invites contributions for a forum dedicated to the life, scholarship, and intellectual legacy of **Professor Gananath Obeyesekere** (02 February 1930–25 March 2025), longtime friend of the Social Scientists' Association of Sri Lanka, to be published in early 2026.

Born in British Ceylon, Gananath Obeyesekere studied English literature at the University of Ceylon (now Peradeniya) and later received his MA and PhD in anthropology from the University of Washington. He taught for many years at Princeton University, from where he retired as Emeritus Professor.

His work is marked by deep engagement with psychoanalysis, historical method, and comparative ethnography, drawing from both Western and Sinhala-Buddhist thought and tradition. Obeyesekere's scholarship addressed the symbolic and psychological dimensions of religious practices, the structure of myth and ritual including healing, and the lived experience of belief.

Polity welcomes submissions from scholars of religion, sociologists, historians and others whose work is informed by his. We especially encourage contributions from younger academics, researchers, and practitioners.

Potential topics might include (but are not limited to):

- Obeyesekere's contributions to the anthropology of religion, ritual, or psychoanalysis
- Critical assessments of one or more of his many books, monographs and journal articles
- Impact of his work on Buddhist studies or the historiography of Sri Lanka
- Obeyesekere's method and style of ethnographic writing
- His role as a public intellectual (for instance, the 1971 Sinhala youth insurrection, the 1983 anti-Tamil pogrom, the 1992 Buddhism Betrayed? controversy, etc.)

In addition to short essays, we also welcome memoir-style tributes, commentaries, or creative engagements that speak to the affective and intellectual dimensions of Obeyesekere's life and legacy.

- Deadline for expressions of interest: **25 August 2025**
- Notification of acceptance: 15 September 2025
- Deadline for drafts: **25 November 2025**
- Publication: 02 February through to 25 March 2026

Please send your pitch not exceeding **300 words**, along with a short biographical note, to polity@ssalanka.org with the subject line: "Obeyesekere Forum – [Title]."

Submissions should be up to **3,000 words**, although shorter contributions for reflections or tributes are welcome too. Please follow *Polity*'s style guide, available at <https://polity.lk/write-for-us/>