

# Shalva Nutsbidze: A genius philosopher of the 20<sup>th</sup> century

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**Abstract---**The works received a great response in Western philosophical journals. Numerous reviews of his works were published in Germany, England, Switzerland and France. A positive review was also published by the German neo-Kantian philosopher Bruno Bauch, and both works were given particularly high marks by Kurt Gassen. In 1932, a review by Bartholomew Landhir was published in the *International Journal of Ethics*, in which the author noted that Shalva Nutsbidze had made a great contribution to the simple solution of complex problems of modern philosophy.

**Keywords---**Shalva Nutsbidze, genius, philosopher, western philosophical, works.

**Introduction.** The purpose of this paper is not only the desire and obligation to participate in the annual conference but also the main goal and task of continuous care for the development of students. Working on this topic is related to students' questions and interests. These questions are: Are there philosophers in Georgia who are on the level of Greek or German philosophers? Who are they, and who is the contemporary genius philosopher of Georgia? There are many world-class philosophers in the history of Georgian philosophical thought, and mentioning figures such as Petre Iberi, Ioane Petritsi, Solomon Dodashvili, and Shalva Nutsbidze is sufficient to create a correct understanding of Georgian philosophical culture for students.

The answer to the genius of Shalva Nutsbidze, as a genius Georgian philosopher, can be found against the backdrop of his telling biography and the analysis of the "genius" problem in his teachings. According to him, the concept of genius denotes an all-encompassing talent that is equally interested in everything. Unlike others, a genius has no specific interest. The interest of a genius expresses the limitless nature of human beings, which encompasses and conquers everything with equal force. It is precisely this multifaceted talent and interests that have determined his "ability to solve all problems" on the difficult path of his social, political, scientific, and philosophical life and activities.

Shalva (Varlam) Isakishvili Nutsbidze was born on December 1, 1888 (Old Style) in the village of Parchkanakhani in the Kutaisi district of Kutaisi Governorate, in the family of a clergyman; his father, Isaki, worked as a public school teacher in Khoni; he was ethnically Georgian. He received his primary education at the "Normal" school in the town of Khoni, after completing the third grade. From 1897, he continued his studies at the Kutaisi Classical Gymnasium. In 1904, he began political activities - he was a member of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party; he edited the illegal magazine "Gantadi" at the gymnasium. In 1905, he attended the funeral of Alexander (Sasha) Tsulukidze in Khoni, which turned into a major demonstration, where Shalva Nutsbidze also delivered a speech on behalf of the Samtredia organization among other orators. From 1905, he worked as a propagandist in the Bolshevik faction of the RSDLP. In 1906, he graduated from the Kutaisi Classical Gymnasium.

In 1907, he continued his studies at the Faculty of History and Philology of St. Petersburg University, specializing in philosophy. From 1908, he began giving public lectures on the philosophy of Marxism. He collaborated with the press under the pseudonym "Sh.N." In 1910, he graduated from the Faculty of Philology of St. Petersburg University, after which he was sent to teach in the Kuban region. From 1911, he distanced himself from the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party. From 1911 to 1913, he studied and worked at Leipzig University. During this period, his work "Theory of Science" was published. This marked the beginning of his work on the "Foundations of Alethology" (the theory of truth). After returning, with the recommendation of professors from St. Petersburg University, he was transferred from Kuban to the "Alexander" Gymnasium in St. Petersburg in 1913.

From 1915, he began working in the Revolutionary Party of Socialist Federalists of Georgia. In 1917, he passed his master's exams and received the right to be an associate professor at St. Petersburg University. In 1917, he was elected to the Central Council of All-Russian National Socialist Parties, where he was sent to St. Petersburg for the "Democratic Conference," where the Declaration of the Nations of All Russia was adopted. He also represented this faction in the Presidium of the "Temporary Republic's Council." In November 1917, he was elected as a member of the National Council of Georgia. In 1918, he was a member of the main committee of the Revolutionary Party of Socialist Federalists of Georgia. He was a founding member of the Tbilisi State University Society; he led the efforts to attract Georgian professors to work at the Georgian university. In 1918, he was invited to Tbilisi...

In 1918, he was invited to Tbilisi State University. At the same time, he served as pro-rector, dean, and director of the fundamental library. On May 26, 1918, for the purpose of collecting Georgian philosophical monuments and promoting philosophical knowledge, Shalva Nutsubidze founded the "Petritsi Society of Philosophy" at Tbilisi State University, which organized seminars and discussions. In 1919, Shalva Nutsubidze prepared an "Elementary Course of Logic," and later an "Introduction to Philosophy, the Problem of Cognition." On March 12, 1919, he was elected as a member of the Constituent Assembly of the Republic of Georgia from the list of the Socialist-Federalist Revolutionary Party of Georgia; he was a member of the education and library commissions.

After the occupation of the Democratic Republic of Georgia by Soviet Russia in 1921, he remained in Georgia and began collaborating with the newspaper "Socialist-Federalist," published with the permission of Tedo Ghlonti, where he called on society to reach a compromise and cooperate with the Bolshevik regime alongside his like-minded colleagues. From 1922, he was a member of the Central Executive Committee of the Soviet Socialist Federative Republic of Transcaucasia and the Georgian SSR,

and he led the Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries of the People's Commissariat of Education of the Georgian SSR. Until 1929, he worked as pro-rector at Tbilisi State University. At his initiative, faculties of law, economics, and Western European languages and literature were opened; he headed the Department of World Literature and lectured on Western European literature, the history of social and political doctrines, methodology of scientific work, and positive law.

In 1926, he worked in Germany on a scientific mission at the University of Berlin, where his philosophical works were published. On April 17, 1927, Shalva Nutsubidze defended his dissertation "Truth and the Structure of Cognition" at Tbilisi State University and was awarded a Doctor of Philosophy degree. In 1930, after returning from an exhibition of Georgian art monuments in Germany, Shalva Nutsubidze was no longer able to continue his course of philosophy lectures at Tbilisi State University. In the summer of 1938, he was arrested in Tashiskari; after a long investigation and torture in the internal prison of the NKVD in Tbilisi (according to his own recollections, he even attempted suicide in his cell), he was transferred to Moscow under the orders of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, where he was forced to agree to secret collaboration.

In 1939, during his imprisonment, at the request and support of Joseph Stalin, he began working on the Russian translation of "The Knight in the Panther's Skin," for which he was soon released from prison; after a personal meeting with Stalin on October 23, 1940, Nutsubidze's translation was approved, and preparations for its publication began—the poem was published in 1941. From 1940 to 1941, he worked in Moscow at the Institute of World Literature. From 1942, he returned to Tbilisi and continued to lecture at Tbilisi State University. In 1944, he was elected as an academician of the Academy of Sciences of the Georgian SSR; from this period, he worked on research to substantiate the theory of the "Eastern Renaissance." In 1945, Shalva Nutsubidze was sent to Berlin on a special assignment. From 1946, he worked at the Philosophy Institute of the Georgian SSR; at the same time, he began teaching a course on the history of Georgian philosophy at Tbilisi State University.

In 1948, at a discussion organized at the Philosophy Institute, Nutsubidze's work "Rustaveli and the Eastern Renaissance" was harshly criticized by representatives of the party nomenclature, resulting in his dismissal from the Philosophy Institute on April 25, 1949. By the end of the 1940s, Shalva Nutsubidze's earlier 1942 research on the identity of "Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite" was somewhat confirmed, as in 1946, Belgian Byzantinist Ernest Honigmann independently reached the same conclusion. The publication of his research generated significant interest, and this version became established in academia under the name Nutsubidze-Honigmann. Following the purges that began in 1953, the charges brought against Shalva Nutsubidze during his 1938 imprisonment were dropped. Rehabilitation Until 1960,

despite the persecution, Shalva Nutsbidze's works - "History of Georgian Philosophy" and "Rustaveli and the Eastern Renaissance" were still published, although he was still restricted from full-fledged scientific and educational activities.

In 1967, Shalva Nutsbidze continued to lecture at Tbilisi State University; he worked on the "History of European Philosophy of the Middle Ages". Shalva Nutsbidze had a peculiar attitude towards religion. "Every person," he wrote, "no matter how small, is the center of life and thus a bridge to immortality, where the meeting of people knows no bounds." Shalva Nutsbidze memorized many prayers learned in high school and knew the Holy Scriptures so well that even Catholicos Kalistrates Tsintsadze was amazed. The Catholicos presented Shalva Nutsbidze with a Bible with the following inscription: "To the descendant of the two elders and the lover of wisdom, the elder of the elders dedicates this to wisdom. 25.05.1951". Shalva Nutsbidze was friends with Patriarch Kalistrates.

Once, it turns out, he said to Shalva Nutsbidze: How would you decorate the Sioni pulpit with your sermons. Shalva Nutsbidze replied with regret: If not a patriarch, I should have been a bishop at least. Shalva Nutsbidze actively participated in the establishment of Tbilisi State University. In 1917, while in St. Petersburg, Giorgi Akhvlediani handed him an invitation from Ivane Javakishvili. Shalva Nutsbidze left his wife and children in St. Petersburg and returned to his homeland, Tbilisi, to participate in the preparations for the establishment of the university. He was in charge of attracting Georgian professors to work at the university. At different times, Shalva Nutsbidze held various positions at the university: vice-rector, dean, director of the fundamental library, head of the department, first dean of the socio-economic faculty, etc. He also opened the faculty of law, which he headed himself.

For 15 years, he was the head of the department of the history of world literature, on the basis of which the faculty of Western European languages and literature was later created. Shalva Nutsbidze taught a number of courses at various faculties: Introduction to Philosophy, Logic, History of Social and Political Doctrines, Scientific Methodology, History of Western European Literature, Probative Law, etc.

At Tbilisi State University, Shalva Nutsbidze also had to work on creating textbooks for students in various fields of philosophy. In a short time, he compiled textbooks that were used by entire generations. In 1919, "Logic. Elementary Textbook" was published, the following year - "Logic, for Secondary Schools" and "Introduction to Philosophy, Part 1, The Problem of Cognition", and in 1923, "Logic: Propaedeutic Course. During the same period, his works were published: "Fundamentals of Alethology", "The Concept of Nature", "Cognition as a Philosophical Problem", "Theory of Art", "Kant in the Perspectives of Human Thinking", etc. In 1918, Shalva Nutsbidze, together with his associates, founded the "Petritsi Philosophical Society"

at Tbilisi State University, which organized seminars and discussions and aimed to collect Georgian philosophical monuments and popularize philosophical knowledge.

He also founded "General Education Courses", which accepted people of all ages who did not have a secondary education certificate, and after completing the courses, they were allowed to study at the university. Under his leadership, the "Social Philosophy Study Circle" was formed. This year, by the resolution of the Pedagogical Faculty of the University, Shalva Nutsunidze's work in Europe is often divided into two periods: the metaphysical period and the period of the history of Georgian philosophy. The first period includes four works: "Bolzano and the Theory of Science" (1913), "Fundamentals of Alethology" (1922), "Truth and the Structure of Knowledge" (1926), and "Philosophy and Wisdom" (1931), which were aimed at establishing a new system in philosophy.

The works received a great response in Western philosophical journals. Numerous reviews of his works were published in Germany, England, Switzerland and France. A positive review was also published by the German neo-Kantian philosopher Bruno Bauch, and both works were given particularly high marks by Kurt Gassen. In 1932, a review by Bartholomew Landhir was published in the International Journal of Ethics, in which the author noted that Shalva Nutsunidze had made a great contribution to the simple solution of complex problems of modern philosophy.

One of the works was first responded to by the Georgian philosopher Konstantine Bakradze, whose letter, "The Problem of Truth and the Structure of Knowledge", was published in the journal "Mnatobi" in 1928. Shalva Nutsunidze's separate articles discuss both the general and individual details of "The Rider in the Panther's Skin". According to the main principle of his research, "The Rider in the Panther's Skin" is organically connected with Georgian reality. In his very first work, he reviewed the main idea of the poem, the integrity of the world, which is a characteristic Renaissance idea. Shalva Nutsunidze concluded that this idea is of Neoplatonic origin. In 1958, Shalva Nutsunidze's monograph "The Works of Rustaveli" was published in Russian, in which the poem is deeply analyzed.

It reviews the environment of the author of "The Rider in the Panther's Skin", socio-economic and political conditions, and folk, literary and philosophical sources of the poem. Shalva Nutsunidze's research attaches particular importance to Shota Rustaveli's worldview, which is closely related to humanism. Shalva Nutsunidze first expressed his concept of the Eastern Renaissance and his criticism of "Europacentrism" in a report at the Maxim Gorky Institute of World Literature in Moscow in 1940. Shalva Nutsunidze gained many supporters and was commissioned to write a monograph on Rustaveli and the Eastern Renaissance. In 1941, the work "Eastern Renaissance and Criticism of Europacentrism" was published in Russian.

Since the 1940s, the main subject of Shalva Nutsbidze's research and the main basis of Rustaveliological theory have been the Areopagite doctrine. The scientist expressed his main views in the works: "Rustaveli and the Eastern Renaissance" (1947, 1967) and "The Work of Rustaveli" (1958). Shalva Nutsbidze finally strengthened the theory of Neoplatonism in Rustaveliology and expanded the scope of the study of "Georgian Neoplatonism". Shalva Nutsbidze wrote that Western scholars (Michelle, Burkhardt, Feucht and others) considered the Renaissance to be a European phenomenon, and some even excluded antiquity from the concept of the Renaissance. Based on the discussion and study of world culture, Shalva Nutsbidze concluded that the Renaissance began in the East and then developed in the West.

After the publication of the monograph "Rustaveli and the Eastern Renaissance" in Russian in 1947, the theory was shared by many scholars. According to Shalva Nutsbidze, the Byzantine Renaissance, which was a phenomenon caused by the cooperation of the peoples of the East with the culture of the West and was stopped for certain reasons, continued in Georgia, which was especially manifested in Ioane Petritsi and Shota Rustaveli. The Georgian Renaissance is discussed together with the issues of the World Renaissance. In Shalva Nutsbidze's work, the idea of the Eastern Renaissance matured, which was connected with the critical discussion of the "Europacentric" theories of Western scholars. Among the issues of the Eastern Renaissance, Shalva Nutsbidze identified two problems that go beyond the scope of Kartvelology and belong to the field of world cultural history.

The first is the Eastern foundations of Western culture, and the second is the significance of the works of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite and the question of the true author. According to Shalva Nutsbidze's worldview, the basis of the Renaissance, as well as Renaissance humanism, both in the West and in the East, was Neoplatonism. In his works, the content of the concept of "Georgian Neoplatonism" was significantly expanded. In the works of Niko Mari, Georgian Neoplatonism was limited to Ioane Petritsi and Shota Rustaveli, while in Shalva Nutsbidze's opinion, its roots went back to the 5th century. For Shalva Nutsbidze, in terms of the Eastern foundations of Western culture, the Areopagite doctrine was of particular importance, in which he saw the theoretical, philosophical foundations of the European Renaissance. In 1942, Shalva Nutsbidze published the work: "The Secret of Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite", which was of great importance in terms of Georgian philosophical thought and the problems of the Eastern Renaissance.

The research of Areopagite led Shalva Nutsbidze to the identification of the true author of his teachings, which was widely echoed in world science. In 1949, Shalva Nutsbidze's research became known to the Belgian scientist Ernst Honigmann, who had already expressed an assumption about the identity of Peter the Iberian and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite in a work written in 1946 and published in 1950.

After Shalva Nutsbidze's research, Honigmann returned to the issue and proved the proposition. Ultimately, this discovery was called the Nutsbidze-Honigmann theory. After Honigmann's death (1954

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