**Tankó Béla (1876-1946)**



**Béla Tankó** served as **doctor of humanities, professor, rector and later dean of the University of Debrecen**; he was organizer of the Summer University and representative of the **Transylvanian School**.

He finished his **secondary school studies** in **Szászvár**, where he graduated with high marks. He studied **theology in Nagyenyed**, and after the foundation of the **University of Cluj** (1895) he became a **theologian** and then a **student of humanities**. He was greatly influenced by the teachings of Károly **Böhm** and István **Schneller**. **Tankó** made significant achievements at an early age: he won a special prize for his study of pre-Kantian and post-Kantian psychology and was even awarded a one-year scholarship to the University of Edinburgh.

After earning his **PhD-degree (Cluj-Napoca**, 1899), he became a high school teacher and **school chaplain**. Even as a secondary school teacher, Béla Tankó was a member of the academic community: he wrote a textbook on church history and participated in the work of the Philosophical Society. In 1914 he became a lecturer at the **University of Debrecen**, where he taught **philosophy** and **pedagogy**. He was appointed university professor in 1916.

He held the **post of dean** twice (1920-21; 1940-41) and was appointed **rector** once (1936-37). He also helped organise the **Summer University**.

The development of his **philosophical views** was greatly influenced by the ideas of Károly Böhm’s so-called **Transylvanian School**. Tankó defined **the essence of the university** in two ways: **universality and freedom**. U**niversality**referred to **university research** and the discovery of truth, and **freedom** stressed the university's right of self-government in matters of science and freedom of research, and the right of students to choose their own research topics.

As a **professor of pedagogy at our university, Béla Tankó** made a significant contribution to the later image of the department, and as a prominent figure in the **Transylvanian School**, he played a decisive role in the development of philosophically based pedagogy.