

# GOETHE MEDAL 2019

## ACCEPTANCE SPEECH BY ENKHBAT ROOZON

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Ladies and gentlemen, my friends,

The conferment of the Goethe Medal is a great honour. I would like to thank you from the bottom of my heart for this honour and for allowing me to speak here today. Thank you too, Damian, for your kind words. It has been several months since I first learned that I would receive this award and since then I have been excited and a little worked up inside. Maybe it's because I've never received an award before and am not used to it. Certainly it has to do with the fact that such an award is not only a great honour, but also a great responsibility.

In Mongolia, there is a saying: “Хун хэлээрээ, Мал хөлөөрөө!” Translated freely, it means cattle solve their problems with their legs, humans with language. Unfortunately, in today's society, we talk far too little with one another about the important issues, and we also don't maintain and develop language as such. But what will become of us and what we can achieve, whether we will be able to solve our problems, relies precisely on this.

We have had a market economy in Mongolia for thirty years. As a publisher, I want to help ensure that we, in this system based on competition, don't forget the community. In this context, in addition to a free press and an open exchange of opinions and information, literature is also important. For the intense cooperation in translation promotion, I would like to express my gratitude to Michael Heinst, the director of the Goethe-Institut Ulan Bator. Thank you, Michael, for your support!

Mongolia faces major challenges today. To meet them we need fundamental social change. The Mongols come from a centuries-old nomadic tradition that is perfectly adapted to our extreme climatic conditions. However, today's challenges are increasingly different ones – they are social and political. In dealing with these new challenges, we can learn from Western cultures. By that I mean in particular the tradition of the European Enlightenment.

Books help to communicate this tradition, but people do as well. Finally, on behalf of everyone I would therefore like to take this opportunity to specifically thank Anita Fahrni and Corinna Bethge, two people who have repeatedly supported us with their work in Mongolia and brought us together with many interesting professionals. There are moments when one has misgivings and sees no alternatives. It is all the more important and better then to seek orientation and find solutions in dialogue with others.

Thank you.