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The Early Dutch Sinologists : a study of their training in Holland and China, and their functions in the Netherlands Indies (1854-1900)

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CHAPTER TWO

HOFFMANN'S STUDENTS (1854–1865)

Teaching a scientist: De Grijs (1854–1855)

Originally, the military pharmacist De Grijs was allowed to follow a crash course¹ in Chinese with Hoffmann for four months as from 1 February 1854, but this was prolonged twice, and De Grijs was able to study in Leiden for almost 1½ years. Each time Hoffmann and De Grijs asked for a prolongation, Minister of Colonies Pahud was very cooperative.

When the first period of four months almost ended, on 29 May 1854, both Hoffmann and De Grijs wrote letters to Minister Pahud explaining the situation and asking for prolongation of half a year or so. Hoffmann wrote that he had taught De Grijs every day from 1 February onwards, and that the results exceeded his expectations; a good basis had been laid by his personal teaching that was adapted to the individual; taking into account how difficult it was to find youngsters who were able and willing to study Chinese, while a real need was felt, he considered it would be best to allow De Grijs as much time as he needed to study. Under Hoffmann's guidance, De Grijs would earlier and with more certainty attain a level of Chinese on which he could continue his studies on his own. According to Hoffmann, a number of months, preferably extending until the next year, would be sufficient. De Grijs wrote in his letter that he had taken such a liking to the Chinese language that he planned to use all his leisure time after arrival on Java to study Chinese, and thus also to extend his knowledge; he asked for leave until the next year. On 7 June 1854, in an elegant bureaucratic twist, Minister Pahud decided that this request could not be approved, but also that De Grijs would not receive sailing orders for the East within six months as from 1 June.²

Half a year later, Minister Pahud asked Hoffmann whether there were any objections to De Grijs' sailing the next month, and on 17 November 1854 Hoffmann answered that De Grijs still needed another 2-3 months of study. Minister Pahud complied with Hoffmann's request and asked him to report when De Grijs was ready.³

Another half year later, the Minister asked again whether De Grijs could leave now. Hoffmann replied on 28 April 1855 that De Grijs was advanced enough to be able to do without his guidance, but that he needed books for further study which he could not afford to buy himself. In a last, half-hearted effort, Hoffmann added some ideas about the possibility of

keeping De Grijs longer, saying that with an eye toward Japan—Hoffmann always kept an eye on Japan—it could be advisable to have De Grijs stay still longer, in order to teach him some Japanese. But as this could slow down his Chinese studies, Hoffmann suggested teaching him Manchu so that he could use Manchu translations of classical and other Chinese books; in that way it would be easier to penetrate into the Chinese mind.⁴ Two days later, on 30 May 1855, De Grijs wrote to the Minister expressing his readiness to go, his wish to continue his studies in the Indies and his need for an allowance for books. Hoffmann specified in a following letter (31 May) the amount of the needed allowance as f524,20, adding a book list with prices. He suggested that the Minister create favourable study conditions for De Grijs in the Indies. He stated that De Grijs would also study one of the Chinese dialects, if possible Cantonese or Hokkien (Fujianese). He hoped that De Grijs would be stationed in a place where he could associate with the most civilised Chinese (meaning Batavia), and that he would not be hampered in his studies; Hoffmann would continue to correspond with De Grijs.⁵ The Minister then decided that De Grijs should continue his Chinese studies on Java “in order to render service to the extension of our knowledge of Chinese products of art and nature.”⁶ This implied that he would no longer be kept in the Netherlands and would receive sailing orders from the military. The Minister only gave an allowance for books amounting to f250, since a copy of one of the most expensive books that De Grijs needed, Von Siebold’s *Nippon*, was already in the Indies.⁷ The books that De Grijs needed would be bought by Hoffmann at Benjamin Duprat’s bookshop in Paris and E.J. Brill’s in Leiden; they would be sent later by Hoffmann.⁸

On 25 June 1855, De Grijs left the Netherlands on the ship *Triton* from Nieuwe Diep (Den Helder) on his way to the Indies.⁹ More than four months later, on 1 November 1855, he arrived in Batavia and was stationed in the garrison hospital in Weltevreden (Batavia). However, the combination of his work as a pharmacist with Chinese studies proved to be hardly feasible. Two and a half months later, on 16 January 1856, Governor-General A.J. Duymaer van Twist¹⁰ wrote to the new Minister of Colonies Mijer that the Chinese language and pharmacology were too heterogeneous and could not be studied fruitfully at the same time. Since there was a need for Dutchmen knowing Chinese—they were a great rarity—and it was not difficult to find pharmacists, he suggested that De Grijs could perhaps be sent to China, in the same way as the other two students a few months earlier. Minister Mijer agreed on 21 April 1856, as long as De Grijs was willing, but also asked what the consequences would be for his career: would he be willing to give up his military career, and could he become a translator?¹¹ At first the newly appointed Governor-General Pahud did not take any measures, and De Grijs was still obliged to work

in the military hospital, making pills from early morning to late evening, having no opportunity to continue his studies and being quietly laughed at by his colleagues: why should a military pharmacist wish to learn Chinese? But when Pahud, who knew De Grijs from the time he was Minister of Colonies, paid a visit to the hospital and heard about De Grijs' predicament, he promised to help him out.¹² In his decision of 26 September 1856, Pahud ordered De Grijs to proceed as fast as possible to Canton to continue his Chinese studies. At the same time, he would be kept in the military, receive the salary of a third-class military pharmacist, and keep his rights to promotion. No decision had yet been made as to whether he should become a translator. He was to receive f 500 for necessary equipment, and travel costs were at the government's expense.¹³

And so De Grijs became the first of Hoffmann's students to be sent to China. After his arrival in Hong Kong on 4 November,¹⁴ he probably joined the others in Macao. Soon afterwards, he chose to go to Amoy,¹⁵ in order to learn Hokkien, the dialect most widely spoken on Java. De Grijs arrived in Amoy on 6 May 1857.¹⁶ The choice of Amoy by the only person who could judge this at the time was a wise one. Thus he paved the way for generations of Dutch sinologists.

*The first student-interpreters for Chinese:
Francken (1855–1857), Schaalje (1855–1859), and Schlegel (1854–1857)*

In May 1855, while still teaching De Grijs and Schlegel, Hoffmann had with foresight and at his own initiative, probably out of a sense of obligation because of his new professorship, searched for new students at the local *gymnasium* and other secondary schools in Leiden. Probably he was helped by his friend Dr. C.A.X.G.F. Sicherer, who was a teacher of German at the *gymnasium* and lecturer at the University.¹⁷ He found four potential candidates, two of whom gave up before they started.¹⁸ From the beginning of July, he began to teach the two remaining students individually four times a week. These were Jan Francken and Maurits Schaalje, who were at that time 16 and 14 years old.¹⁹ Francken was the eldest son of a Leiden bookseller, who had passed away the year before. He was a student at Dr. J.J. de Gelder's *Paedagogium*,²⁰ a school for classical languages (*gymnasium*), and planned to take the examination that gave entrance to the University. He "intended to study at the University and then to obtain the *radicaal* of civil official in the Netherlands Indies at the Academy in Delft." This meant he would first study law in Leiden and then be trained at the Delft Academy for two years in order to become an East Indies official of the first degree and work in the judiciary in the Indies. Schaalje was the only son of a tax collector in Zoeterwoude (a village near Leiden);

his mother had passed away when he was three years old, and in 1849 his father had remarried (but this marriage would be dissolved in 1860). He was going to school at the *Genootschap Mathesis Scientiarum Genetrix*, where he received a commercial education, and was taught subjects such as Commercial Knowledge, Algebra, Arithmetic and Free-Hand Drawing. This was the basic education of the commercial class.²¹ He intended right from the beginning to study Chinese only, in order to become a translator.²² In any case, both students planned to go to the Indies.

Although Hoffmann was a titular professor now, his students would not be formally registered at Leiden University. They were always called 'pupils' (*élèves*) or 'trainees' (*kweekelingen*) instead of 'university students' (*studenten*); it was only from 1894 on that all students of Chinese destined for the Indies were enrolled at Leiden University.²³

A few months later, on 10 October 1855, Governor-General of the Indies Duymaer van Twist decided to send the first two students, Albrecht and Von Faber, to Canton to study Chinese. On the same day, he wrote to Minister of Colonies Pahud asking him to train two youngsters in the Chinese language in the Netherlands at the expense of the Netherlands Indies government, since efforts to find more candidates in the Indies had failed. This request was in accordance with the advice of the Council of the Indies to train interpreters in the Netherlands instead of Batavia (6 June 1854). Therefore, the new Minister of Colonies Mijer wrote to Hoffmann on 22 January 1856²⁴ about his idea to train two youngsters in the Netherlands, who would be sent to China when they were 16 to learn Mandarin or Cantonese. As Hoffmann had already taught several students of that age, Minister Mijer asked his opinion on the future to be envisioned for Francken and Schaalje.²⁵

On 3 February 1856, Hoffmann answered that after he told Francken and Schaalje about the Minister's letter, Francken had abandoned his plan to study at Leiden University and the Delft Academy, and was preparing himself exclusively for an appointment as translator in the Netherlands Indies. He was continuing to study classical and modern languages at the *Paedagogium*, in order to pass the examination giving entrance to the University as far as linguistic knowledge was concerned. He would, however, not begin an Academic study, and was prepared to go to the Indies or China. In fact, the modern and classical (European) languages were mainly being studied for the sake of his Chinese and Japanese studies. He still needed to study general knowledge for 1 to 1½ years to lay the necessary foundation. Francken had exceptional talent, diligence, and desire to study, and he would soon reach a better-than-average level. Hoffmann thought Francken should concentrate on the study of Mandarin, probably because of his scholarly talents.

The other candidate, Schaalje, although two years younger than Francken,

kept up well with his fellow student. Apart from his going to the *Genootschap Mathesis*, he took private lessons in English, was advanced in French, and he had a special gift for Chinese; he enjoyed his studies and gave promise of being successful. Hoffmann planned to bring him to a level on which he could do practical work involving China and the Chinese. Schaalje also needed another 1-1½ years of study, in particular to improve his English and his general knowledge.

In another letter of December 1855, Hoffmann had already extensively reported on Schlegel's studies, concluding that he was convinced Schlegel would become one of the most excellent scholars in Chinese language and literature.²⁶ Probably because Minister Pahud had written earlier that Schlegel was not destined to become a translator in the Indies, but was to become Hoffmann's successor, on 12 February 1856 Minister Mijer decided that only Francken and Schaalje would be sent to the Netherlands Indies and China for further education, as soon as Hoffmann considered them ready to go.²⁷

A year later, on 30 January 1857, Hoffmann reported to the Minister of Colonies that all of his students—including Schlegel—would be ready to go to China by the end of the summer. "I did all I could to teach them solid knowledge and to lead them as far as possible. And through their diligence and efforts they have obtained the best results." Hoffmann reported also on their individual progress,²⁸ showing that some were more ready than others, which led to a shift in candidates.

Gustaaf Schlegel (then 16½) had originally planned to study at Leiden University and take his doctorate in some subject before proceeding to the Netherlands Indies, but that would still take three to four years. On Hoffmann's advice, his parents had abandoned this plan to study at Leiden University. Hoffmann wrote about Gustaaf:

His love for the Chinese language, his talent, diligence and intelligence are a guarantee for me that he will completely master the language through intercourse with the Chinese. He is also good at French, German and English, and very well educated in general knowledge.²⁹

Francken (then 19) showed a diligence in studying Chinese that was beyond Hoffmann's praise; he had an extraordinary talent for studying in general. Hoffmann was convinced that he would become one of the most able students of Chinese language and literature.³⁰ He passed the examination for admission to the University with the best results, and had been studying botany with Professor W.F.R. Suringar³¹ during the past year, with favourable reports.

Schaalje (16½) was also diligent and his knowledge of Chinese was sufficient, but he lacked adequate general education and lagged considerably behind Schlegel and Francken. Therefore it would be better to keep him

for another year. He lacked the necessary broad overview of the essence of etymology and logical language structure.³² This could best be learnt by studying the basics of Latin. Knowledge of Latin would also lead to a more fundamental knowledge of the modern languages and of the mother tongue. But Schaalje needed financial compensation (*tegemeetkoming*) for taking private lessons in Latin, since his parents could not afford this.³³

Finally, on 16 June 1857, Minister of Colonies Mijer put the best two students, Schlegel and Francken, at the disposal of the Governor-General of the Netherlands Indies for training as Chinese interpreters.³⁴ Thus did the first two students in Leiden enter the colonial service in the manner that would be continued for the next fifty years. They were to receive free transport to Batavia (and China) as first-class government passengers, but with normal ship rations. They also received a gratification for equipment of f600. Their departure should not be delayed because of the situation in China,³⁵ while they could also be further trained on Java for some time.

Hoffmann did all he could to compensate Schaalje, who had been pushed aside by his brighter and better-educated fellow student Schlegel. After Hoffmann sent another letter to the Minister of Colonies (13 April 1857), the Minister decided to allow Schaalje to study for another year with Hoffmann, and to give him a stipend of f25 monthly, the same amount as Schlegel received.³⁶ This was effective from 1 June, two weeks before Schlegel and Francken entered the colonial service. Later Hoffmann tried to alleviate Schaalje's financial situation even more. He asked the Minister to pay Schaalje's monthly stipend of f25 retroactively for one year previous to 1 June 1857. The final decision of the Minister was to pay the stipend of f25 retroactively from June 1856 to May 1857, and raise his monthly stipend to f50 as from June 1857.³⁷ This would be the stipend of students of Chinese in Leiden for the next fifty years.

As he had done earlier for De Grijns, on 8 August Hoffmann asked for an allowance of f300 for books for Schlegel and Francken, and an advance payment of another f300; both were approved.³⁸ These books were not only necessary for studying Chinese, but also for obtaining general knowledge without which an interpreter would not be able to perform his duties adequately. This money was to enable them to buy the scholarly apparatus which they could not afford. English sinological books, in particular, were very expensive. For instance, the indispensable Chinese–English and English–Chinese dictionaries of Morrison and Medhurst already cost f200 (f142 + f58). As with De Grijns, the books would be sent later to the Indies by Hoffmann.³⁹

On 27 October 1857, Schlegel and Francken boarded the barkship *De Commissaris des Konings Van der Heijm* and proceeded to Batavia, where they arrived more than three months later, on 5 February 1858. From 26 February to 12 March they travelled to Hong Kong. They first stayed a

few months in Macao, and arrived in Amoy on 1 June 1858, one year after De Grijs.

Meanwhile, Hoffmann intensified his lessons with his only student Schaalje, and in 1858 Schaalje was studying at Hoffmann's house daily, usually for seven hours.⁴⁰ He was receiving private instruction in Latin and English, the latter by a native teacher to acquire a pure pronunciation.⁴¹ He probably studied Dickens' *Pickwick Papers* and *A Christmas Carol*.⁴² Sometimes even Hoffmann attended these other lessons. Apart from these, Schaalje was also taught German and geography. Despite all these extra lessons to prepare Schaalje, it still took 1½ years before Hoffmann considered him ready to enter the colonial service and go to China. On 22 January 1859, Hoffmann (again) reported to the Minister of Colonies that Schaalje was ready to go, preferably on the same conditions as Francken and Schlegel. Hoffmann suggested sending Schaalje to Amoy in order to learn Hokkien, as that was the most widely spoken dialect on Java. Moreover, De Grijs, Francken, and Schlegel were already there and could offer help.⁴³ He was also given the same allowances and advance payment of f1,200.⁴⁴ In a letter to Hoffmann, De Grijs had suggested that, for financial reasons, it would be better to sail directly to China instead of by way of the Indies. Hoffmann made the same suggestion to the Minister, but it appeared that at the Ministry no possibility of direct shipping to China was known.⁴⁵ Thereupon Schaalje did some investigation and wrote to the Minister that he had found a direct ship to China, the newly built three-masted schooner *Sophie Amalia*, which was prepared to take him to Hong Kong for f800 as a government passenger. Schaalje entered the colonial service on 24 February 1859. He would leave for China about mid-April 1859. One other condition had also been met: he had no military obligations on account of the National Militia Law (*Wet op de Nationale Militie*); there was sufficient guarantee that he would pay for a substitute (*remplaçant*).⁴⁶ He arrived in Amoy before 12 July 1859.⁴⁷

A Japanese intermezzo:

Buddingh, Groeneveldt (both 1858–1861), and De Breuk (1858–1864)

On 9 July 1858, Hoffmann wrote to the new Minister of Colonies J.J. Rochussen that he again planned to train two youngsters as students (*beoefenaars*) of Chinese and later Japanese. Hoffmann wrote that both candidates had exceptional aptitude for languages (*munten uit in aanleg*). If the Minister considered this a useful training course, an allowance from the Colonial Funds would be welcome. Both students were without means, and this allowance would be necessary for them to receive proper

training and to be committed to government service. There was also a third potential student, whom Hoffmann had not yet seen.⁴⁸

Minister Rochussen invited Hoffmann for an audience, where it appeared that he had misunderstood Hoffmann's letter and thought this training course was for private purposes. Hoffmann could only rectify the misunderstanding by paying a visit to Secretary General Keuchenius of the Ministry⁴⁹ and writing a letter to N.C. Mulder, *referendaris* at the Ministry (29 July 1858). In this letter, Hoffmann explained the matter and wrote that the two talented young men should have the prospect of a government appointment, and after a period of trial should receive the same stipend as Schaalje. Thereupon the Minister understood the case and agreed with Hoffmann's proposal to train some students, asking Hoffmann when he would begin and how many students were to come.⁵⁰ A month later Hoffmann gave the names of the three students, stating that they had done well during the trial period (25 September 1858), and a few days later, on 1 October 1858, stipends of *f*50 were approved for all as from 1 September 1858. As before, the money was to be remitted to Hoffmann. But this time, he was not only charged with their supervision, but he would also have to send quarterly accounts of the students' expenses with receipts.⁵¹

However, the official correspondence of 1858 did not make clear that Hoffmann actually planned to train them as Japanese interpreters. This would lead to a protracted misunderstanding between Hoffmann and the government. Four years later, in a letter to Minister Uhlenbeck, Hoffmann gave an extensive explanation (12 August 1862). He wrote that after he had taught Chinese to four youngsters, who were sent to China for practical training (Schaalje had not yet left), and two youngsters were sent to China from Batavia with the same purpose, he thought that he should now teach Japanese to some youngsters. In his opinion it would be very important for the Netherlands and its Colonies to have Dutch officials who knew Japanese. Reasons for this were the opening up of Japan and the prospect that Japan would sooner or later again play a role as a seafaring nation and carry on trade with the Netherlands Indies. Youngsters trained in Japanese would be every bit as useful as those trained in Chinese. By saying that he would teach "Chinese and later Japanese," Hoffmann had meant that a solid study of Japanese should be preceded by an equally solid study of written Chinese, considering that knowledge of that language was necessary if one did not only wish to learn to speak Japanese, but also to read and write it.⁵² In the 1830s, Hoffmann himself had also first learned Chinese and then Japanese.

For Hoffmann's new students also, it had been evident from the start that they were to study Japanese and would be sent to Japan.⁵³ The first two students were W.P. Groeneveldt and J. de Breuk; they were later joined by J.A. Buddingh. Willem Groeneveldt, then 17, went to school at a *gym-*

nasium in Leiden after his family moved there. His father had been at some time postmaster with the Horse Post Service, but had passed away in Gorinchem in 1855. Later his mother had a cloth shop in Leiden.⁵⁴ Jan de Breuk, then 14, was still going to school in Leiden. He was the only son of the classicist and Leiden printer Dr. H.R. de Breuk, who had left Leiden in 1856 because of political problems and commercial failure, and now worked in IJsselstein. Arie Buddingh, the third student, then 18, was the son of a Protestant minister in St. Oedenrode. His father was a brother of Cornelia Buddingh, wife of Herman Schlegel, so he was Gustaaf's cousin. One of his father's brothers was the well-known missionary in the Indies Dr. S.A. Buddingh.

After a week of preparations, Hoffmann started to teach them Chinese on 11 September 1858. At the same time he checked their level in English, French, German, and Latin, concluding that he had made the right choice for these youngsters.⁵⁵ Moreover, Buddingh and Groeneveldt had finished or almost finished the *gymnasium*—Groeneveldt would finish in the summer of 1859—and could concentrate all their energies on studying Chinese and start to study Japanese earlier. They could also take university courses in the sciences, just as Francken had done.⁵⁶ Only De Breuk would study more slowly, since he was still at school.

Student life and studies

Hoffmann did not write reports on his students' progress and curriculum as he had done before, but from his quarterly financial reports one can get a lively impression of the lives and studies of his pupils. In the first report, Hoffmann wrote that he would have preferred to limit their expenses to scholarly needs, but he could not totally exclude household necessities. One of his pupils, De Breuk, could not count on any allowance from his parents (his father and stepmother had left Leiden after the collapse of their printing business), and the other two had very meagre resources.⁵⁷ In the beginning Hoffmann's accounts were very detailed and accompanied by stacks of receipts. These were for board and lodging, household necessities, writing utensils, pocket money, books, fees for schools and other private lessons, university courses, sports, and holiday travels home or to other places.

Hoffmann was not a professional accountant, and his calculations were more than once rejected, whereupon he would be obliged to write a new balance sheet; both the old and the new sheets were preserved in the files of the ministry. But after a first corrected version by Hoffmann, sometimes leniency was applied to the remaining faults. One commentator wrote in the margin: "There is a difference of 5 cents, but after having privately

made critical remarks before, one cannot bother this learned man again with this matter.”⁵⁸ Later, minor corrections were simply written on Hoffmann’s sheet with a pencil.

Starting with their second year, Hoffmann often gave his pupils certain amounts for their own spending—in particular to Groeneveldt—and balance sheets and receipts were not as detailed as before.

For board and lodging, including fire and light, De Breuk at first paid *f*25 and finally *f*29.17 per month, more than half of his stipend, while Buddingh, who was living with his uncle Herman Schlegel, only used a *f*50 subsidy for board and lodging for three months, one third of his stipend,⁵⁹ and Groeneveldt, who was living with his family, used nothing. As a result of this, at the end of their studies in the summer of 1861, Groeneveldt had a surplus of *f*320, and Buddingh one of *f*100, which Hoffmann gave them before they left for the East. As to household necessities, De Breuk owned almost nothing; for instance, in the first month he bought a seaweed and husk (*zeegras en peul*) mattress, a woollen blanket, a cotton blanket, and a thick flannel undersheet (*molton onderkleed*) for a total of *f*24.50; two pairs of high shoes, one pair of slippers (in total *f*7.75), and a pair of spectacles (*f*5, on 24 October 1858). Groeneveldt bought a pair of trousers, a jacket (in total *f*15), and a pair of shoes (*f*3.50). As writing utensils, Buddingh first bought paper, ink, pencils, pipes of lacquer, notebooks (*cahiers*), letter paper (*catern post*), a writing board, and a Chinese inkstone (the latter *f*0.50). Buddingh and Groeneveldt received *f*1.25 in pocket money per week, while the three to four years younger and poorer De Breuk received *f*0.25.

The books they bought can be divided into three categories: books necessary for their Chinese and Japanese studies, for their schools and extra lessons such as in Latin, English and other modern languages, their science courses, and books for their own general education and pleasure. The first category comprised grammars, dictionaries, travelogues and books on Chinese and Japanese history and geography; one book on Chinese chronology all students bought was Ludwig Ideler’s *Ueber die Zeitrechnung der Chinesen* (Berlin: Dümmler, 1839). The second category included Latin classics such as works of Julius Caesar, Livy and Horace (the latter two for Groeneveldt only), Latin grammars and dictionaries, books on Dutch grammar and spelling,⁶⁰ English grammars (in French and in German!), dictionaries including English–German and French–Dutch dictionaries, and Dickens’ *Pickwick Papers* (bought by all three in 1860, probably for their English reading lessons); there were also schoolbooks on mathematics, physics, history and geography. Finally, for their general education and pleasure they bought books on geography, Netherlands and world history, world mythology, atlases and classical and modern literature, mostly poetry, in French, German (Schiller) and English. Receipts of books pur-

chased at Brill's bookshop in Leiden were signed by E.J. Brill himself,⁶¹ and those bought at Kramers' bookshop in Rotterdam were signed by H.A. Kramers.⁶² In particular Groeneveldt, who also had more money to spend, bought many books, often at auctions in Leiden and The Hague (for instance at Van Stockum's); he often went there together with Buddingh, who always bought less. As was usual at the time, many books were subsequently bound in hard covers, for which also receipts were added. Only once did they buy a Chinese book: the *Four Books*,⁶³ for which each of them paid *f*2 to Hoffmann, and which they all had bound in two volumes for *f*0.40 each.

From the quarterly reports, one can also see which schools they attended and what other private lessons they followed. In the beginning, De Breuk and Groeneveldt still went to school. Groeneveldt was probably doing his last year at the *gymnasium*; in any event he used his stipend to pay his tuition fee (*minerval*) for the municipal (*Stedelijk*) *gymnasium* from 1 March 1859 onwards for half a year.

De Breuk first went to a general secondary school for two years, and then to the *gymnasium*, also for two years. From October 1858 to October 1860, he was at the 'Instituut Eichman,' which was probably another name for the 'Institut Geregt,' a so-called French school, a common type of secondary school where no classical languages were taught. He paid *f*6.25 monthly including drawing lessons. His attendance and grade reports at the 'Institut Geregt' (all in French) for October and November 1858 were added to the receipts, showing the subjects, number of hours attended, and sometimes even the number of mistakes made during that month. In October, these were: Dutch grammar (8 lessons, 26 mistakes), mathematics (38 lessons), physics (4 lessons), history (17 lessons), geography (9 lessons), and French grammar (27 lessons, 183 mistakes). The following month, 9 lessons of English grammar were added, during which De Breuk made 317 mistakes! Apparently his English was not as good as Hoffmann had described it to the ministry. This was a small school; there were only eleven pupils in his class. The second year, De Breuk also took private lessons in Latin and German with Dr. Sicherer from October 1859 to March 1860 and in the summer of 1860, for about *f*17 monthly. From October 1860 on, he must have been attending the *gymnasium*, as he paid its tuition fee from then until the summer of 1862.

Right at the beginning, during the last quarter of 1858, all three took European calligraphy lessons (*schoonschrijven*). Buddingh did not pay any school fees, but he took 'repetitions' in the classical languages (Latin and Greek) daily in August and September 1858, and afterwards twice a week for about one year, at *f*1 per lesson.

From October 1859 to March 1860, all three students took 'English reading lessons' from James Perrin, an English teacher at the *gymnasium* in

Leiden. In the beginning he wrote in a letter to Hoffmann that he was very satisfied with these pupils and gave a list of the dates of his lessons. They missed a lesson only once because they went to a book auction, and they all went home for the Christmas holiday. Each paid *f*4 monthly. During the last months they probably read in *The Pickwick Papers*.

During their second year, after Groeneveldt had finished his *gymnasium*, he and Buddingh also took courses in science at the university for *f*30 each.⁶⁴ Both followed a physics course by Professor P.L. Rijke,⁶⁵ and Groeneveldt also took a course in meteorology which was also given by Rijke.

Buddingh and Groeneveldt also took gymnastics and fencing lessons for a year during 1859 (*f*0.50 per week including fencing sword and belt), while De Breuk had a season ticket (*abonnement*) for the swimming school (*f*1 monthly). Later he also took fencing and even ballroom dancing lessons.

Just after Schaalje left for China, Buddingh and Groeneveldt both had Schaalje's portrait framed for *f*0.60 (on 12 May 1859). In the nineteenth century, it was very common to give a portrait of oneself to one's friends. During the summer holidays and at Christmas, De Breuk and Buddingh travelled to visit their parents. For example De Breuk went home to his parents in IJsselstein at Christmas 1858 (*Kersvacantie [sic]*); he took the train from Leiden to Haarlem, from Haarlem to Amsterdam, from Amsterdam to Utrecht, and a closed cab (*vigilante*) from Utrecht to IJsselstein; the total costs (two-way) including the tip to his uncle's maid-servant were *f*10. In 1860 Buddingh and Groeneveldt also took longer trips to an unknown destination for which they received *f*75 and *f*100. And in 1861, Hoffmann reported he "gave De Breuk *f*50 in cash for a holiday of 14 days (without my escort)."⁶⁶

An extraordinary student of Japanese: St. Aulaire (1859–1861)

In the autumn of 1858, a few months after the three students arrived in Leiden, Hoffmann also got a full-time student of Japanese, Rutger Jacob de Saint-Aulaire (called Rutger), who was then 31 and was married.⁶⁷ There was never any misunderstanding as to the purpose of St. Aulaire's studies, but since Hoffmann was never formally assigned to train Japanese interpreters, it would take some efforts from Hoffmann to get him on his way to Japan, as presently will be pointed out. He was the son of a school director (*rector*) and had had a good education at a *gymnasium*; later he studied navigation and went to sea for some time. After studying J.H. Donker Curtius' *Proeve eener Japansche spraakkunst* (A tentative grammar of Japanese) which was edited by Hoffmann (1857) at the request of

the Minister of Colonies, St. Aulaire came to Leiden in November 1858 to ask Hoffmann some questions. When Hoffmann noticed that he had completely mastered this grammar and had a clear understanding of it, he advised him to study Schott's *Chinesische Sprachlehre*,⁶⁸ because knowledge of Chinese was indispensable for the study of Japanese. After St. Aulaire had visited him again, Hoffmann wrote a letter to Minister of Colonies Rochussen (18 February 1859) requesting that he be given some kind of allowance for books and later a government position in Japan, where St. Aulaire could extend his knowledge and improve his practical skills. According to him, St. Aulaire would be a great asset to the government. Finally, he remarked that it would be a pity if St. Aulaire would offer his services to foreign governments, who at that time would greatly welcome persons with his qualities, in particular Dutchmen.⁶⁹ As St. Aulaire was living in Tiel (90 km from Leiden), it would be best if he could come to Leiden for at least six weeks to practice the Chinese and Japanese writing system and to profit from contacts with Hoffmann and the other students. Much could not be directly learnt from books, and sometimes a hint from the teacher was enough to get the student to make the right turn, and not the wrong one. A month later, on 16 March 1859, St. Aulaire also wrote to the Minister to ask permission to study in Leiden: he had made some progress in the Chinese and Japanese languages, and his purpose was to get a government position to serve the country. He asked for an allowance because he could not pay the costs.⁷⁰

A few years earlier, J.H. Donker Curtius,⁷¹ then Dutch commissioner in Nagasaki, who had been chief (*opperhoofd*) on Deshima from 1852, had asked the Governor-General to send a youngster to Japan to study Japanese and to be appointed as chancellor or secretary at the consulate.⁷² After the Minister had been reminded of this by his staff, he decided to give St. Aulaire a stipend of f800 per year (i.e. f66.67 per month) as from 1 May 1859 in order to study Japanese, but without deciding to what position he would be appointed. At the same time he requested Hoffmann to report on his progress.⁷³ No account of his expenses can now be found in the archives.

In the meantime, Buddingh and Groeneveldt studied Chinese for one year. Afterwards they switched to Japanese, and only continued to study Chinese when it was necessary for their Japanese studies. All three students bought Donker Curtius' Japanese grammar from the publisher Sijthoff on 29 October 1859.⁷⁴ St. Aulaire also first studied Chinese, as Hoffmann had told him to do; after some time, when all students had reached the same level, they studied Japanese together, all preparing to go to Japan. St. Aulaire, being the oldest, was to go first. Hoffmann at one point suggested that one of the others should go with him, but in the end, he went alone.⁷⁵ During their joint studies, St. Aulaire and Groeneveldt compiled *A*

Manual of Chinese Running-hand Writing, Especially as It is Used in Japan, Compiled from Original Sources, which was published in 1861 (see below).

In March 1859, Minister of Colonies Rochussen had asked the Governor-General to make arrangements for St. Aulaire as soon as possible. Since in the rest of that year Hoffmann still had received no answer from the new Minister of Colonies J.R. Cornets de Groot van Kraayenburg, in January 1860 he again recommended St. Aulaire for “some government position in Japan.” In the margin the Minister commented that Hoffmann did so “without awaiting information from the Dutch commissioner in Japan.”⁷⁶ In any case, the new Minister Loudon wrote again to Governor-General Pahud on 25 May 1860, repeating the question, and also asking whether more Japanese interpreters should be trained by Hoffmann. It then became clear that one reason for the lack of communication was that the original letter from the Dutch commissioner Donker Curtius in Japan to the Governor-General (dated 22 July 1859) had been lost. After having again consulted Donker Curtius in Japan, Governor-General Pahud answered on 9 August 1860 that it was not clear whether any other position might be suitable for St. Aulaire except that of Japanese interpreter. Donker Curtius had written to him that although St. Aulaire was studying Japanese, it was not known whether he would be suitable as an interpreter or in any other function. No other position could be offered to him as long as nothing had been decided on the future organisation of the Dutch consulates in Japan; in case they were enlarged, he could perhaps work as a clerk and later become vice-consul. Pahud then stipulated that if St. Aulaire was appointed as interpreter, the conditions should be the same as for the Chinese interpreters Von Faber and Albrecht; that is, he should have a monthly salary of *f*300, work minimally for five years, etc.⁷⁷ As to the second question, the Minister answered that all other students (Buddingh, Groeneveldt, and De Breuk) who were studying Chinese and Japanese, were exclusively destined for appointment as Chinese interpreters.⁷⁸ This information was not passed on to Hoffmann, resulting in a continuation of the misunderstanding. Pahud concluded that from now on, only one new student should be trained by Hoffmann as Chinese interpreter. In that way, in the end there would be ten Chinese interpreters, which should be enough to meet even the most urgent needs.⁷⁹

St. Aulaire agreed with these conditions of appointment, and on 18 January 1861 he entered the colonial service.⁸⁰ He received the same allowances for books as the Chinese interpreters had before. His request for an extra advance payment of *f*300 was granted.⁸¹ He then proceeded to the Indies, together with his wife, who bore him a daughter at sea.⁸² After arrival on Java on 31 July, he was sent to Japan on 15 August 1861.⁸³

At that time, the relationship between the Netherlands and Japan was

going through a series of changes. For more than 200 years, the Dutch had been the only Western country with regular trade relations with Japan through their commercial settlement on the island of Deshima (Nagasaki), which was still under the authority of the Governor-General of the Indies and the Ministry of Colonies. After Japan had been forced to open its doors in 1854, and trade was opened at Yokohama, this settlement soon lost its significance. In 1860, the Dutch chief (*opperhoofd*) and later commissioner Donker Curtius was succeeded by the first Consul General K. de Wit, who was also an East Indies official. On 23 July 1862, it was decided that responsibility for relations with Japan (and China) was to be transferred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.⁸⁴ In the same year the consulate general was moved to Yokohama, near the capital Edo (now Tokyo), but the consulate in Nagasaki was maintained. The general situation in Japan remained chaotic until the Meiji Restoration in 1868.⁸⁵

Owing to the transfer of consulates in Japan, St. Aulaire's career did not develop smoothly. He was appointed as Japanese interpreter at the Dutch consulate in Nagasaki (on Deshima), and both successive Consuls General, De Wit, and De Graeff van Polsbroek were very satisfied with his work. After the decision on the transfer in July 1862, St. Aulaire had objections against going over to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and becoming a Netherlands government official, as he would then lose the privileges of an East Indies official as regards salary and pension.⁸⁶ The Minister found these objections not unreasonable. After some negotiation, St. Aulaire was offered the combined position of chancellor and interpreter (*kanselier en tolk*) at the consulate general in Yokohama, but he did not accept it.⁸⁷ Thereupon this function was given to another Dutchman. Starting in June 1863, when D. de Graeff van Polsboek, representing the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, took over the Consulate General from De Wit, St. Aulaire's salary was for the time being paid by the Netherlands government in The Hague. But since he was an East Indies official, he would probably be called back to Java. In January 1864, at the request of the Consul General, he was allowed to stay for another six months in Japan, where there were important translation services for him to perform.⁸⁸ Half a year later, he was honourably discharged as Japanese interpreter, and allowed half pay (*wachtgeld*) for a maximum of one year in anticipation of re-employment,⁸⁹ for which he had to return to Java. Neither the Netherlands government in The Hague nor the Indies government wished to continue paying for his position in Japan. In the meantime, he had become seriously ill; when the Consul General paid him a visit in the beginning of May 1864, St. Aulaire requested sick leave to return to Java, considering that his family could not stay alone in Japan in case his illness proved fatal. This was granted by the Consul General. They left Japan on 31 May 1864. On Java, he was soon granted two years' sick leave in

the Netherlands. A few months later, on his way to the Netherlands, he passed away on board the English ship *Canton* on 5 October 1864; he was 37 years old.⁹⁰

An unexpected reversal: from Japan to China

Three years earlier, just after St. Aulaire left the Netherlands, Hoffmann had reported to Minister Loudon on 24 April 1861,⁹¹ that Buddingh and Groeneveldt were now advanced enough to be sent to Japan, where they would need one year of practice in conversation with the Japanese in order to attain the required standard of an interpreter, provided that they continued to study diligently. No reason was given for not considering De Breuk ready, but he was then only 17 and was still going to school.

Four days later, on 29 April 1861, Hoffmann again wrote to the Minister, mentioning that there was a wonderful opportunity (*heerlijke gelegenheid*) for the students—who had probably never met a Chinese before—to become acquainted with the Swatow (Shantou 汕頭) dialect on their way to Japan. According to Hoffmann's information, Albrecht and Von Faber had also studied that dialect. The reason was that the Chinese medical doctor Liu Noni 劉奴年⁹² had arrived in Amsterdam and was looking for a chance to return to China by way of Java. Hoffmann asked the Minister to grant him a free passage, but not as a servant, and if possible also a gratification, to be paid to him on his arrival in Batavia.

The captain of the ship which had brought Liu Noni to Holland had written a letter to Hoffmann explaining his situation. Liu Noni had travelled from China to Cuba as a doctor accompanying a shipload of emigrants (coolies). After his arrival in Cuba, he had worked in Havana for a Dutchman, Michel van Osselt, owner of a candy factory (*confiturier*). Now he had come to the Netherlands on a Dutch ship, working as a steward (*hofmeester*) for bed and board, behaving very well. He was 28 years old, and in China he had a wife named A-tuan and two sons named A-nai and A-ai. Upon his return to China, he was expected to pay reciprocal services. The captain praised him as follows:

He is an honest, sincere, good-natured and humane character, sometimes witty; a pure type of the Chinese race, not handsome by our standards, but in his manners friendly, obliging and even charming.⁹³

The Minister of Colonies answered Hoffmann that he would allow free passage and the same allowances (*f*900 + *f*300) to the students as the others had received, and also free passage for the doctor; the decision on his gratification should be taken after arrival in Batavia. The one condition the Minister put forward for Buddingh and Groeneveldt was that their

obligations for military service should be taken care of. Buddingh and Groeneveldt entered the colonial service on 10 June 1861.⁹⁴

Later that month (29 June), Buddingh and Groeneveldt submitted a request for an extra advance payment of *f*300, which would raise the total allowance and advance payments to *f*1,500. The reason was that otherwise it would be impossible to provide the necessary equipment to profit from the knowledge of natural sciences that they had acquired during their studies in Leiden.⁹⁵ This request was also approved by the Minister. From Buddingh's letters to his uncle Herman Schlegel, then director of the Museum of Natural History in Leiden, we know that they needed instruments such as skinning knives (*vilmesjes*) and substances such as arsenic and spirits for the conservation of specimens of birds (bird skins), reptiles, insects etc., and that they were planning to collect specimens in Japan for that Museum.⁹⁶ Herman Schlegel also prepared a list of animals to be collected in Japan.⁹⁷ The lists of books that they planned to buy included works on meteorology and astronomy, for the study of which they probably also needed instruments.⁹⁸

For this extraordinary allowance of *f* 300, certificates of debt were drawn up and guarantees were signed by Herman Schlegel and the lawyer H.A. Lisman for Buddingh, and by Groeneveldt's mother Mrs. Jackson and his half-brother Aert Groeneveldt,⁹⁹ mayor of Molenaarsgraaf, for Groeneveldt. Their military obligations were also taken care of.¹⁰⁰ They left on 3 October 1861¹⁰¹ on the barkship *Landbouw*, together with Liu Noni.

They arrived in Batavia almost four months later, on 20 January 1862. From there Liu Noni left for China. Perhaps the students did not learn much from him after all, because a month later Buddingh wrote somewhat condescendingly to his uncle Herman Schlegel that "Our Chinese is already in China; he left earlier than we did; on board he behaved charmingly."¹⁰² In Batavia, they met with a great disappointment. On 4 February, Governor-General Sloet decided that they would be sent to Macao in China to continue their Chinese studies there, in order to become Chinese translators.¹⁰³ At the same time, Sloet wrote to the Minister of Colonies that he was surprised that Buddingh, Groeneveldt, and De Breuk had been "trained to be interpreters for the Chinese and Japanese languages." There was no need for this combination of languages, and as these languages allegedly were so difficult to learn, it would be a waste of time and money; there was no need for the Ministry of Colonies to pay for the study of an extra language, although it might be useful for scholarship. Buddingh and Groeneveldt should preferably go to China: St. Aulaire having been sent to Japan, there was for the time being little need for more Japanese interpreters. When all students now in China arrived in the Indies, there would be eight interpreters, which would be sufficient, considering that they would be needed in the three main towns of Java, and on Riau, Banka, and Western Borneo.¹⁰⁴

Ten days later, on 14 February 1862, Buddingh and Groeneveldt raised objections to this decision, stating that they were extremely surprised and disappointed for two reasons. The first was that they had studied Japanese for more than two years, and Chinese only to the extent that it was necessary for their Japanese studies. They had learnt Chinese only as a preparation for the study of Japanese. From the start, Hoffmann had told them they were destined to study Japanese, and would go to Japan. Moreover, they had bought many books for their Japanese studies and lacked many necessary Chinese books. Since all other promises such as yearly stipends of *f*600, free passage and allowances had been fulfilled, they had reason to believe Hoffmann, who was their intermediary with the Ministry of Colonies. Their fellow student St. Aulaire, who joined them after some time, was indeed sent to Japan. The second objection was that their present and future incomes were not indicated, while St. Aulaire had been immediately told about his financial position. Hoffmann had assured them that this problem would be solved before their arrival in the Indies, but that proved not to be the case. In their conclusion, they requested to cancel the decision of 4 February and to send them to Japan on the same conditions as St. Aulaire. These were much more advantageous than those of the student-interpreters in China, who only received pocket money. In the meantime, they would proceed to Macao in good hope of reasonable redress.

On their way to China, Buddingh wrote to his uncle from Singapore on 21 February 1862:

Within eight days we will go by steamship to Hong Kong and then to Macao, because they want to use us as Chinese translators, but we have protested against this. It is all our own fault; we should not have trusted the words of Dr. Hoffmann, but should have taken care that our appointments were written down as: 'for further training as Japanese translators' and not 'as Chinese and then Japanese interpreters,' which is now stated in our letter of appointment. I expect that the Professor will use every means to have us sent to Japan. Otherwise, we will have to make do.¹⁰⁵

They first travelled to Macao, where the Dutch consul J. des Amorie van der Hoeven resided. Buddingh then went to Canton to visit his cousin Schlegel and the other student-interpreters Francken and Schaalje, while Groeneveldt returned to Hong Kong. Then they travelled together from Hong Kong to Amoy, where they arrived in the beginning of May 1862.¹⁰⁶ After receiving the students' request, Governor-General Sloet wrote again to the Minister of Colonies (now Uhlenbeck) on 27 February 1862 stating that in the Minister's decision on the stipends of 1 October 1858 nothing had been mentioned about the purpose of their studying Chinese and Japanese. Since there was a greater need for Chinese interpreters, he could only send them to China in the usual way. On the other hand, their objections seemed justified, seeing that they had always been called 'students

of the Chinese and Japanese languages.' Sloet did not consider himself authorised to approve their request, so he asked for authorisation (*magtiging*) or an explanation. If authorised, and if Buddingh and Groeneveldt should go to Japan after all, Hoffmann should arrange for De Breuk to study Chinese and go to China. In that case, there would be one Japanese interpreter more than needed, because there were positions only in Nagasaki (Deshima) and Kanagawa (Yokohama).

On 14 June 1862, Minister of Colonies Uhlenbeck sent Hoffmann a copy of both letters from the Governor-General and the students' request. Two months later, a little belated because Hoffmann was busy with the first Japanese delegation that visited Europe and the Netherlands,¹⁰⁷ he replied on 12 August 1862. He argued that according to the original plan Buddingh and Groeneveldt were students of Japanese, and that their destination should be Japan, in order to continue their studies in practice, either as aspirant translator and interpreter,¹⁰⁸ or in any other capacity at the Netherlands consulate in Japan. In the first year of their studies, they had learnt the written Chinese language with Mandarin pronunciation, but from the second year they had started to learn Japanese, and Sino-Japanese pronunciations were used for the Chinese characters. The student of Japanese who studied in this order—as Hoffmann himself had done—would, like any Japanese who had learned Chinese at school, understand written Chinese and be able to express his thoughts in Chinese, so he could also function as a translator for Chinese. But this would not mean that he could speak Chinese, nor act as Chinese interpreter. For that purpose, he should study the spoken language, either Mandarin or one of the many dialects. The European translator of Japanese was therefore also a translator of Chinese, as long as it was restricted to written communication. His major specialism should be: translator and interpreter of Japanese. Hoffmann considered it not his task to investigate how many interpreters were needed for present or future contacts with the Japanese in order not to lag behind other nations.¹⁰⁹ His task was only to train youngsters so that they could become capable officials in case of continued study in Japan. And taking account of the possibility that some of them could be lost through death—in those days not an unusual thought—or for other reasons, he thought that he should teach at least three students. If the Minister of Colonies, in the light of Hoffmann's explanation, should decide that Buddingh and Groeneveldt were after all destined for Japan, then their studies in China should not be considered a waste of time: better knowledge of Chinese would be of great advantage in Japanese studies. As to De Breuk, Hoffmann planned to teach him Chinese for another year in connection with the Japanese language—probably meaning he would mainly teach him Japanese—and then to propose sending him to the Netherlands Indies. Some friends in the Japanese delegation had told

Hoffmann confidentially that the Japanese government intended to invite teachers of foreign languages, including Dutch, to come to Edo.¹¹⁰ In that case, a person who had prepared himself as De Breuk had, would be the first to be qualified, and this would also be an opportunity to continue his Japanese studies.

Finally, there was one important question for each student of Japanese, namely what kind of Japanese he should study. Hoffmann had asked the opinion of Fukuchi Genichirō, secretary of the Japanese embassy, who wrote and told him that in addition to the local dialects spoken all over Japan, there was also a general colloquial of the civilised class (*beschaafde stand*), which was the colloquial of the capitals Miyako (Kyoto) and Edo (Tokyo), in particular Edo. Hoffmann noted that this colloquial was also used in his *Winkelgesprekken / Shopping dialogues*, published in 1861. For communication with the local population of Nagasaki or Hakodate (on Hokkaidō), one should know the local dialects, but for communication with the civilised class, the Edo language should be used. Dutch officials who would have contact with the civilised class should concentrate on that language, which they could learn in Kanagawa (Yokohama). However, in Nagasaki and Hakodate where local dialects were spoken, one could also find persons willing to teach the Edo language.

Minister of Colonies Uhlenbeck made a final decision on 29 August 1862:

I do not wish to revert to this matter that cannot be undone, nor to investigate in detail whether the meritorious Dr. Hoffmann because of his interpretation, a consequence of his warm interest in Japanese language studies, has gone further than the Minister intended, but I have to confess that given that interpretation there is some ground for objections.¹¹¹

After the transfer of responsibility to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, it was out of the question to use colonial means for the training of Japanese interpreters. Therefore there was no prospect for an appointment as Japanese interpreter for Buddingh or Groeneveldt. On the other hand, it would be regrettable if nothing was done with their knowledge, which could be very useful in the Indies. The Minister suggested that after they finished their studies in China, they could perhaps be sent to Japan, for instance to Kanagawa, to practice their Japanese for one year, and then be appointed in the Netherlands Indies. As to De Breuk, the Minister agreed with Hoffmann's idea that he could be sent to Japan as a teacher of the Dutch language; his place could then be taken by Meeter. Finally, the Minister remarked that according to Governor-General Sloet eight Chinese interpreters would be enough, but on 9 August 1860 the previous Governor-General Pahud needed ten interpreters. Therefore, before the letters of February 1862 were received, it had already been decided to accept another student

(Meeter). If De Breuk would go to Japan, there would be nine interpreters. The result of all this was that Buddingh and Groeneveldt would remain in China. Fortunately, two years later they wrote to Hoffmann that they had become quite happy with their studies and fully accepted the decision of the Governor-General.¹¹²

The shift of responsibility for Japanese affairs also had consequences for Hoffmann's own position. Minister Uhlenbeck therefore also wrote to Hoffmann that the title conferred on him, Japanese translator of the Netherlands Indies government¹¹³ should be cancelled, to which Hoffmann would probably have no objections, but the Minister would propose to the King to change his other title to "professor charged with the training of interpreters for the Chinese and Japanese languages."¹¹⁴ However, the Minister believed that Hoffmann would continue to be willing to translate Japanese and Chinese documents for the government. The word 'Japanese' mentioned in this new title did not mean that the Minister intended to charge him with the training of Japanese interpreters (the contrary was true); it was added here on the one hand because Hoffmann might still be asked to do so in the future, but on the other hand, and mainly, because the Minister assumed Hoffmann would be pleased with this title, being so diligent in Japanese studies.¹¹⁵ A week later, Hoffmann accepted the change of title, since his relation with the Ministry would remain the same.¹¹⁶ Hoffmann's titles were changed accordingly by Royal Decree as from 1 January 1863.¹¹⁷

From 5 to 15 June 1863, a second Japanese delegation consisting of fifteen students visited Leiden; they were the first Japanese sent abroad for study. De Breuk and his fellow student Meeter acted as guides for the Japanese guests. This delegation included Nishi Amane 西周 and Tsuda Mamichi 津田真道, who would study law in Leiden with Professor Simon Vissering¹¹⁸ for two years. Later they became famous reformers in Japan.¹¹⁹

The next year, after De Breuk had studied for almost six years, Hoffmann considered him ready to be sent to the Netherlands Indies or China. Since the plan of the Japanese government to invite Dutch teachers had not been realised, De Breuk could only be sent to China.¹²⁰

On 4 April 1864, De Breuk entered the colonial service.¹²¹ Thereupon the same procedures were followed as with the other sinologists: he received an allowance of *f*900 + *f*300 advance payment for books (but no advance payment for buying scientific equipment).¹²² He was exempted from military service because of myopia (*bijziende*)¹²³ and therefore did not have to pay for a substitute. Hoffmann requested the Minister to allow De Breuk to travel by overland mail via Suez instead of 'by sea.' According to a calculation made by De Grijs, the normal sea voyage (around Africa) would cost *f*600 from the Netherlands to Java, and another *f*600 from

Java to Hong Kong, and would take four months, excluding the time spent on Java. The ‘overland’ voyage meant taking the overland route by train (in use since 1859) from Alexandria to Suez.¹²⁴ In that case, the voyage by Messagères Impériales to Hong Kong would cost *f* 1,190 (Rotterdam – Marseille *f* 115, and Marseille – Hong Kong *f* 1,075) and would take only six weeks. In that way, De Breuk would arrive faster and more cheaply at his destination Hong Kong. He would like to take the ship leaving 19 June from Marseille. The Minister had no objections¹²⁵ and Royal permission was obtained.¹²⁶ Later all Dutch sinologists travelled by this route. On 10 June 1864, De Breuk left the Netherlands on his way to Hong Kong, where he probably arrived by the end of July. The Consul in Hong Kong, A.W.P. Kup, was charged with receiving him and giving him necessary help.¹²⁷ Since De Grijns had already left Amoy in 1863 and the other three students left in the summer of 1864, De Breuk studied mainly in Macao.

Competition for the last chance: Meeter (1862–1865)

The possibility of studying Chinese and Japanese with Hoffmann gradually became more widely known, but the students were still only recruited through personal connections. For the last chance, Hoffmann did not need to search for a candidate: by 1862 there were already three candidates whose parents submitted requests to the Minister to allow their sons to study with Hoffmann.¹²⁸ Nothing is known about their motivation. It may have been that some candidates thought they would be studying Japanese and subsequently go to Japan, as in their requests they wrote “the Chinese and Japanese language.” Perhaps others were attracted to the subsidised study and the promise of a well-paid appointment in the Indies, or they became interested through the enthusiastic stories that they heard from earlier students.

Minister Uhlenbeck wished to have only one other Chinese interpreter trained besides De Breuk who was still studying in Leiden, and asked Hoffmann to investigate the suitability of the candidates. At first, there were the requests from J. Kuneman, a shopkeeper in Alkmaar, of 26 July 1859, and from A. Hakbijl, custos of the Von Siebold Japanese Museum in Leiden,¹²⁹ of 1 November 1861. They asked to have their sons trained as translators for the Chinese and Japanese languages. Later it developed that the mother of H.M.J. Francken had also submitted a request.¹³⁰ Hoffmann investigated the matter, and on 23 February 1862 he wrote a report on these candidates to Minister Uhlenbeck.¹³¹

The first candidate, Gerrit Cornelis Kuneman, then 21 years old, from Alkmaar, had already applied in 1859 through a request by his father, but he was not admitted at the time though note was taken of his request.¹³²

Therefore Hoffmann now asked Dr. J.J. de Gelder, director (*rector*) of the *gymnasium* in Alkmaar, for his advice. The answer was that Kuneman had already been studying surgery for two years and that he was no longer available.¹³³ However, De Gelder recommended another student, Pieter Meeter, son of the well-known educator Andries Meeter, then director of the reformatory institution for boys in Alkmaar, who would finish his *gymnasium* in August of that year. On Hoffmann's question whether this youngster should start studying Chinese right away or should finish school first, De Gelder was in favour of the latter. Hoffmann agreed with this, since in that case Meeter could attend science courses at the university just as Francken, Buddingh, and Groeneveldt had done. He should study for two to three years in Leiden in order to receive a complete education. "A pure language study is insufficient,"¹³⁴ Hoffmann added; "the sphere of skills should be wider." Whenever possible, Hoffmann encouraged the young sinologists to study one of the sciences.

The other two candidates were still attending the Leiden *gymnasium*. They were Henri Marie Josephus Francken (then 16), a younger brother of J.J.C. Francken, and Abraham Hakbijl (then 17), who were expected to finish school in 1864 and 1865. Hoffmann considered it better to have them finish school first; otherwise there would be too little time left for Chinese. In the past, he had taken youngsters from the *gymnasium* and other schools because he had to accept every student he could find.¹³⁵ Later he could get youngsters who had finished the *gymnasium*. His former student J.J.C. Francken agreed with Hoffmann that the *gymnasium* should be finished first before his brother studied Chinese. He hoped that he would be stationed in Batavia, where he would train other interpreters, including his younger brother, who was making very good progress and had an ear for music. However, Henri Francken's mother wished him to start now. Hoffmann would await the decision of the Minister.¹³⁶

Hakbijl was in the same situation as Henri Francken. In 1859, Hoffmann had already advised him to finish the *gymnasium* first. That level of education was necessary for any profession. Now he made inquiries with his teachers, who reported that Hakbijl's diligence and behaviour were both good, but his intellectual capacities were very mediocre. After Buddingh and Groeneveldt had left, Hoffmann had advised Hakbijl to choose another profession, for instance to attend a teacher's training college (*kweekschool*). When the Hakbijls stuck to their opinion, Hoffmann told the father that he could submit a request to the Minister of Colonies, which he did.

Not surprisingly, the Minister chose Meeter.¹³⁷ The following month, he decided that Meeter could study Chinese as from 1 August 1862 with a stipend of f50 per month. He wrote to Hakbijl's father and Francken's mother that there was no opportunity for their sons now, and that it was impossible to tell when new interpreters would be trained.¹³⁸ Moreover,

the young Hakbijl would only be allowed to submit a new request if he finished the *gymnasium cum laude*.¹³⁹

After Meeter started his studies, Hoffmann again had to write three-monthly financial reports, but only a few very succinct reports on Meeter can be found in the archives. His lodgings and boarding cost him *f*31.25 per month, and for 'fire and light' during October-March he paid another *f*7 to 9, amounting to almost 80% of his stipend. He once visited the Agricultural Exhibition in The Hague (in August or September 1862, at a cost of *f*2.50), and he took a course with professor Rijke in the Academic year 1862–1863,¹⁴⁰ and at some time also with Professor Van der Boon Mesch.¹⁴¹ He once bought Chinese books (*Mencius*) for *f*12.¹⁴²

In contrast to De Breuk, who had been declared unfit for military service, Meeter had to draw a lot for conscription, and to his father's dismay, he drew a 'winning lot.' His father sent a petition to the Minister of Colonies on 15 February 1864, arguing that his son was in the midst of his studies, and that he himself could not afford a substitute, and would request exemption. The Minister answered that he could give neither any advice nor any assistance.¹⁴³ A few years before, Groeneveldt had submitted the same request with success. Meeter's father then wrote to the Minister of Defence, who refused his request for an indefinite leave; they had to pay for a substitute.¹⁴⁴

On 12 February 1865 Hoffmann asked Minister Fransen van de Putte to allow Meeter to go to China,¹⁴⁵ two and a half years after he had begun his studies. On 15 March 1865, Meeter entered the colonial service. He received the same allowances and advance payment¹⁴⁶ as De Breuk, and also travelled by overland mail directly to China. According to Hoffmann, he was to concentrate on the Hakka dialect. Like De Breuk, he studied for most of the time in Macao.¹⁴⁷ Before leaving the Netherlands, the 'aspirant-interpreter for the Chinese language'¹⁴⁸ as he was called, also had to sign a contract. It was stipulated that he would have to reimburse all stipends, allowances, and passage fees if he were to leave government service within five years after appointment, either at his request or as a result of willful disobedience (*dienstweigering*) or other reprehensible behaviour.¹⁴⁹ Meeter arrived in Macao on 30 May 1865.¹⁵⁰

From this point on, Hoffmann's task of training sinologists was at an end. The plans were that in the future, interpreters would be trained by his former students in Batavia.

There was still one belated request from someone who wished to study Chinese with Hoffmann in 1866, showing that a subsidised study and assured position could be attractive to ambitious youngsters without means. On 16 December 1866, F.H. van den Brink, proprietor of a boarding school in St. Oedenrode, wrote to Minister of Colonies Mijer that as legal guardian of the minor Eduard Adriaan Cabell, he wished him to be eligible

as student-translator of Chinese in the Netherlands East or West Indies. Van den Brink probably knew about this possibility from J.A. Buddingh's father, who was a Protestant minister in St. Oedenrode. In his letter, Van den Brink explained that E.A. Cabell was a son of E.F. Cabell, physician (*geneesheer*) in Beneden-Commewijne district in the colony of Suriname. His pupil had originally intended to study at the Royal Military Academy (KMA) but had been rejected in June because of a slight myopia, and now he was cut off from a military career. His father did not have ample resources, and he had many children for whose future he had to take care. Therefore there were impediments in the way of a scientific education at a university (*Hoogeschool, Polytechnische School*), while return to the colony in its present condition was inadvisable for anyone without the prospect of a position. In the past, several youngsters had been appointed as student-translators of Chinese, but according to Professor Hoffmann, there had not been any recently. Van den Brink ended with an urgent appeal to the Minister to help guarantee the future of a youngster without means but with ambition. The Minister's answer came four months later. It was short and clear: this request could not be taken into consideration, because student-interpreters were no longer trained in the Netherlands—just a week before, the Minister had given permission to train interpreters in Batavia¹⁵¹—and no interpreters were to be trained for the West Indies.¹⁵²

As another consequence of the decision to train interpreters in Batavia, on 29 April 1867 the Minister of Colonies suggested transferring Hoffmann's salary to the national budget. He wrote to the Minister of Home Affairs, asking him to establish a chair for Chinese for Hoffmann at Leiden University as from 1 January 1868, noting that this had already been considered in 1854. If approved, Hoffmann's yearly salary of f2,800 should then be on the national budget rather than that of the Ministry of Colonies.¹⁵³ The Minister of Home Affairs had objections against establishing such a chair and putting his salary on the national budget for 1868, since a new law on higher education was expected within a few years. In 1868, Hoffmann's salary was to be paid by the Minister of Colonies.¹⁵⁴ It probably continued to be paid by that Ministry.

Hoffmann's later students: Vissering, Maclaine Pont, and Serrurier

After the last sinologist had left, Hoffmann did not completely stop teaching. In 1873, despite his bad health, he was teaching Chinese and Japanese to three students, W. Vissering and P. Maclaine Pont, who were also regular students of law at Leiden University, and to the candidate notary L. Serrurier.¹⁵⁵

Willem Vissering (1851–1931) was a son of Simon Vissering (1818–88),

professor of law in Leiden, who taught the first two Japanese students Nishi Amane and Tsuda Mamichi in Leiden in 1863–5.¹⁵⁶ Willem Vissering was educated at the high-class boarding school Noorthey near Leiden under J.H. Kramers, and he registered in Leiden University as a student of law on 25 September 1869. From 1872 on, he also studied Chinese. His doctoral thesis comprised a translation and study of Ma Duanlin's 馬端臨 “Qianbi kao” 錢幣考 entitled: *On Chinese Currency: Coins and Paper Money* (Leiden, 1877), for which he received his doctorate in Law on 27 June 1877.¹⁵⁷ At one time he planned to work at the Dutch Consulate General in Yokohama, but was obliged to give up this plan for personal reasons.¹⁵⁸ Later he worked as a lawyer in Amsterdam.¹⁵⁹

Pieter Maclaine Pont (1850–1926) also was a student of Law at Leiden University starting in 1868. He studied Chinese with Hoffmann together with Willem Vissering. Both began in 1872 and intended to use their knowledge of Chinese when employed in the Indies. Maclaine Pont became *cum laude* doctor in Law on 6 December 1873. From 1875 to 1893 he worked as a lawyer (*advocaat en procureur*) in the Indies, and from 1878 as a barrister at the High Court of the Indies.¹⁶⁰

Lindor Serrurier (1846–1901) first received several other kinds of professional training, including that of notary. When the Japanese government made an appeal to young Dutchmen capable of working for the reorganisation of new ministries in Japan, Serrurier decided to learn Japanese.¹⁶¹ Thereupon he studied Chinese and Japanese with Hoffmann. Later, he was registered as a student of Law in Leiden University on 23 September 1874; he became a doctor in Law on 5 October 1877. In 1877 he became curator and in 1881 director of the Ethnographic Museum in Leiden. From 1887 he was also lecturer in Ethnology and Japanese at Leiden University.¹⁶² In 1896 he resigned from both positions and went to the East Indies, where he became a teacher of the geography and ethnology of the East Indies in Section B of the Willem III Gymnasium in Batavia; this was a training college for East Indies officials similar to the one in Delft. He edited parts of Hoffmann's Japanese-Dutch and Japanese-English dictionaries¹⁶³ and published a catalogue of Japanese books in Leiden (*Bibliothèque Japonaise: Catalogue raisonné* etc.). He wrote a very personal obituary of Hoffmann.¹⁶⁴

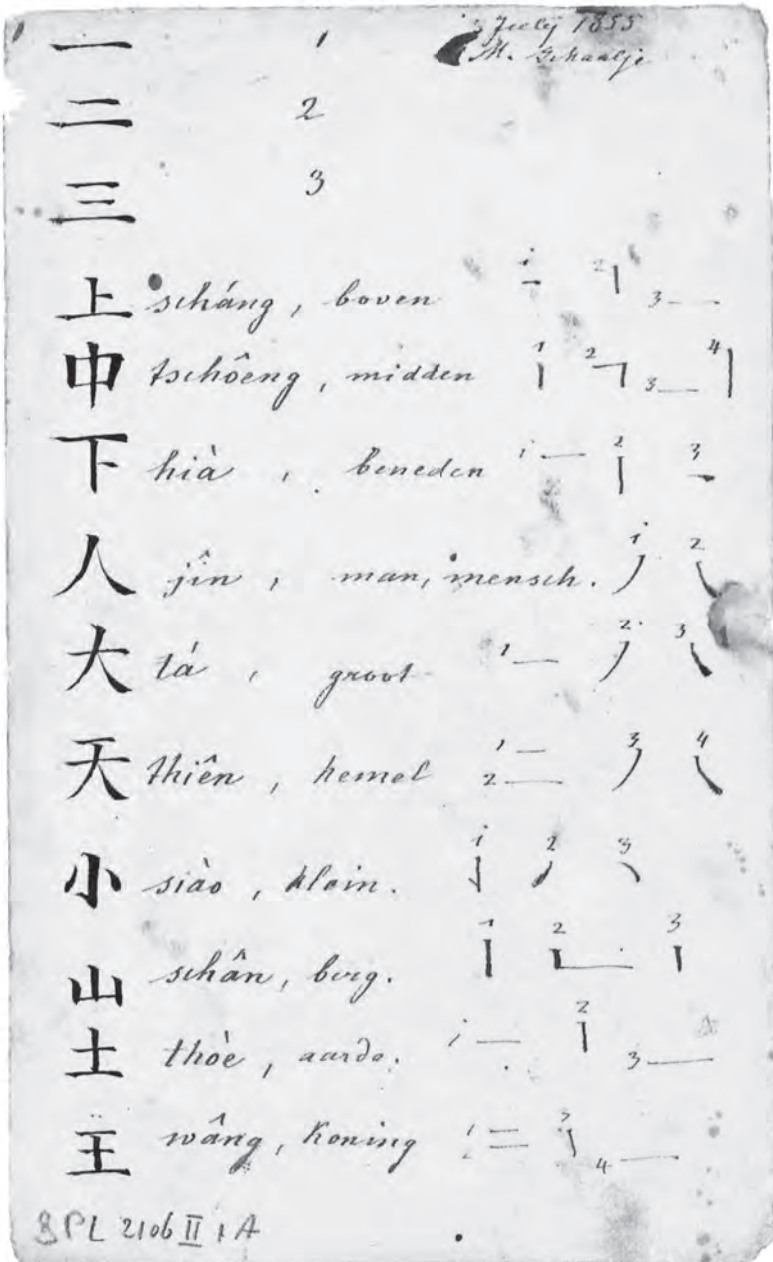
Hoffmann's teaching methods

Hoffmann's teaching methods can be deduced from several sources: (1) in the first place from his master plan and his reports on the progress of Schlegel, De Grijs, Francken, and Schaalje, and his financial reports on Buddingh, Groeneveldt, De Breuk, and Meeter, which are all kept in the

Archives of the Ministry of Colonies; and (2) in the second place from some of Hoffmann's teaching materials, and from his students' notebooks and study materials that are now mainly kept in the BPL documents in Leiden University Library and in the Hoffmann Collection in Utrecht University Library.

Hoffmann taught his students individually in tutorials lasting two to three hours at his home, as was usual at the universities. Schlegel first came twice a week, but starting in November 1854, he came three times a week,¹⁶⁵ and from 1 October 1855 on,¹⁶⁶ four times a week. Francken and Schaalje also came four times a week.¹⁶⁷ In March 1856, Hoffmann taught Francken, Schaalje, and Schlegel four times a week, each time for four consecutive hours, requiring at least two hours of preparation for each day,¹⁶⁸ but it is not clear whether he taught all three students at the same time. De Grijs, who only had a short period in which to study, even came five times a week. Hoffmann mostly taught his students individually, adapting his teaching method to each student, but after some time, he sometimes taught two or three students together when they had reached the same level. For instance, he taught Schlegel and De Grijs from January to May 1855, and Buddingh, Groeneveldt, and St. Aulaire from 1859 onwards. He also asked students to help each other, for example asking Schlegel to help De Grijs with his writing exercises in 1854. In his last year, Schaalje studied at Hoffmann's home for seven hours per day, but he probably studied most of the time by himself. At first, Hoffmann lived at Hogewoerd 124, and from October 1856 at Hooglandse Kerkgracht 23 in the house now named 'Kikkerberg.' There he lived with the family of Dr. C.A.X.G.F. Sicherer, teacher of German at the *gymnasium* and lecturer in German language and literature at the university.¹⁶⁹ In 1856 Dr. Sicherer had four children aged 1, 3, 6 and 8 years; two children born in 1857 and 1860 both passed away in 1860.¹⁷⁰ Hoffmann was always very fond of children, but he was unmarried, having a maidservant (*diensbode*) living in.

Hoffmann probably taught his students according to his master plan and began with eight to ten lessons on general ideas of the writing system and language, as in the introductory chapter in Rémusat's Chinese grammar. He first taught them a lot of characters, which was done with great speed. In the Schaalje Collection there is a small piece of paper with a list of thirteen basic characters and their stroke order written by Hoffmann, on which was written "M. Schaalje 3 July 1855" (see illustration 1). This was probably the day Schaalje started to learn Chinese. There is also a list of the 214 radicals in lithography by Hoffmann, with translations written by Schaalje, dated 10 August [1855].¹⁷¹ De Grijs had the most intensive course; in the beginning, the writing system caused him great difficulties, but after a week (!) he overcame them. Within three and a half months, De Grijs learnt the forms, pronunciation and meaning of 316 characters.



1. Basic character strokes by Hoffmann for Schaalsje, 3 July 1855 (BPL 2106 II 1A).

He reviewed the characters three times a week by doing writing exercises together with Schlegel, from which both profited. He also composed sentences using these characters according to the rules of the language, and learnt many other things through his conversations with Hoffmann.¹⁷²

The most complete syllabus of Hoffmann's teaching can be found in a stack of cards among W. Vissering's papers. Hoffmann taught Vissering the basics of Chinese many years later, in 1872–4, but his methods were probably the same as before. He first explained the structure of the six types of Chinese characters, for example 明 (sun and moon) *ming* 'light', 仙 (man and mountain; immortal) *siën* (Dutch *bergman*), 林 (two trees) *lin* 'forest.' Then he taught the radicals, strokes, some simple sentences, and sentences explaining the structure of characters, such as: 東字從日在木中 "The character 'east' comes from 'sun' in a 'tree'." Subsequently he taught sayings, beginning with: 不入虎穴，不得虎子（安得虎子）。"If one does not enter the tiger's lair, one cannot catch the tiger's cubs (how can one catch the tiger's cubs?)"。一言已出四馬不追。"A word once given cannot be retracted even by four horses." 見人之得，如己之得。見人之失，如己之失。"If you see another person win, consider it your own winning; if you see another person lose, consider it your own loss." For a beginning student, trying to understand such complicated sentences must be more like solving puzzles than learning a language, but it would probably be very entertaining. Soon afterwards, Hoffmann began teaching grammar including various particles, principles of word order, etc. From these cards, one can see that Hoffmann sometimes explained words in a humorous way, for instance the word *fei* which can both function as a negation and denote disapproval. He wrote on one card in Dutch: "非 *fei* (also *fi*, *fûi*) = a disapproving 'foei!'" ... The reading *fûi* is the Hakka pronunciation of Hoffmann's teacher Ko Tsching-dschang. It would be similar to the Dutch word *foei* ('foeey!'), which is an exclamative denoting disapproval.¹⁷³

It is touching to read in Hoffmann's reports how each of his students became very fond of Chinese after some time. After three and a half months of study, De Grijns was "now very pleased with his studies, which is a guarantee for me that he has been won for Chinese studies."¹⁷⁴ Another six weeks later, he had become so fond of the study of this language that he planned to use all his spare time in Java to study Chinese.¹⁷⁵ Schlegel also showed an "extraordinary pleasure with this specialism."¹⁷⁶ Schaalje and Francken "were soon pleased with the Chinese writing and language."¹⁷⁷

Writing and pronunciation

Hoffmann liked drawing, and he had a good hand in writing Chinese characters. He was very meticulous in getting every stroke right, and he

mastered several styles of writing, using both a pen and a writing brush. This can be seen in his manuscripts,¹⁷⁸ but also in lithographs drawn by him, for instance the *Edict of Toleration* (Edict of toleration of Christianity) of Shaoxing Fu of 1848.¹⁷⁹ In his students' notebooks, the characters were also written very meticulously. It was doubtless on his orders that Schlegel, Buddingh, Groeneveldt, and De Breuk took European calligraphy lessons. But it is curious that in normal writing, Hoffmann and his students used the style of printed Chinese characters, the so-called Song style,¹⁸⁰ not that of written characters (*kaishu*); in other words, they copied the characters from printed books and not from written calligraphy—in contrast to the Chinese, who would always use calligraphic styles for writing and would never dream of using the printed style. Therefore their characters, although the strokes are correct, appear somewhat disharmonious and awkward, having thin horizontal strokes written perfectly horizontally, and fat vertical strokes; there were also other characteristics of the printed style; on the other hand, there were variations in thickness in strokes bending leftward (*pie* 丿) and rightward (*na* ㇇) as in calligraphy (see illustrations 1-6). Judging from the specimens of their writing still extant, they sometimes used a broader pen for writing large characters. At least one of Hoffmann's students also used a writing brush; Schaalje wrote the characters in his list of classifiers with a brush and India ink (*Oostindische inkt*).

Groeneveldt and St. Aulaire also felt the need to learn the running-hand writing (*xingshu*). Since no guide to this had been published before in the West, they compiled their own manual, which they finished in March 1861, shortly before St. Aulaire left, and which they published themselves.¹⁸¹ They received full support from Hoffmann, who gave them his copy of the Japanese dictionary *Banpō setsuyō fukizō* 萬寶節用富貴藏.¹⁸² The students cut this book up into 45,000 pieces, from which they selected and rearranged about 5,000 characters, each in standard and cursive script (*kaishu* and *xingshu*), according to the number of strokes in standard script. They also made a second list arranged according to the first and the last stroke in calligraphy. The characters were beautifully reproduced in lithography by P.W.M. Trap. They spent a lot of time compiling this manual, but certainly learned much while doing so.

About 1844, the Chinese texts of the treaties with foreign countries of 1842–4 were published together with the English and French texts¹⁸³ and were received with great interest. Hoffmann therefore decided to publish also the Japanese texts of Japan's treaties with five foreign countries of 1858. These had been printed in Japan in 1859 in the Japanese official style of running script. Hoffmann had prepared lithographic facsimile publications before, but this time he had his students Groeneveldt, St. Aulaire, and Buddingh copy the Japanese texts with a writing brush, thereby practicing their writing skills. After they left for the Far East, Hoffmann

took care of the lithographical printing in 1862. In his introduction, Hoffmann praised the result as follows:

Although the gentlemen who prepared their fac-similes,—Dutch students of the Chinese and Japanese languages,—had, at the time they performed this work, never been in Japan, the copy is so correct that no native of Japan would hesitate in acknowledging the writing to be truly Japanese; and that is enough.¹⁸⁴

In his teaching, Hoffmann used a transcription system that he may have devised himself. His system was based on the French system of Prémare, Rémusat, and Julien, but adapted to his native German pronunciation.¹⁸⁵ In the first half of the nineteenth century, all sinologists used the so-called Southern Mandarin or Nanking pronunciation as the basis of their transcriptions. This was the standard pronunciation of Mandarin before it was gradually replaced by Northern Mandarin from Peking during the second half of the nineteenth century.¹⁸⁶ It was also the standard pronunciation used in native Chinese dictionaries. Southern Mandarin retained some sound contrasts that were lost in Northern Mandarin, such as *k-ts* in *kín* 金 – *tsín* 津 (now both *jín*), *k'-ts'* in *k'íng* 慶 – *Ts'íng* 清 (*qíng/Qíng*), and *sí-hí* in *sí* 西 – *hí* 希 (*xī*).¹⁸⁷ In order to be able to use foreign dictionaries and grammars, Hoffmann's students also had to learn the various transcription systems in French, English, and German that were adapted to the pronunciation rules of these languages. For instance, the Mandarin word *shu* 書, “book”, could in these three languages be transcribed ‘chou,’ ‘shoo’ and ‘schu.’

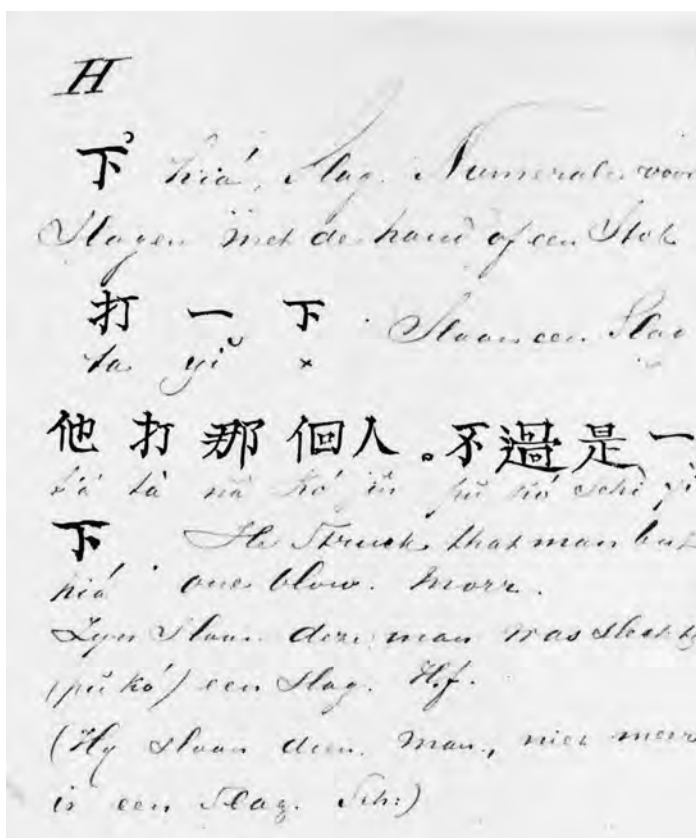
Hoffmann stressed the importance of learning Chinese characters, their meaning and to a lesser extent their pronunciation. Hoffmann originally was a talented opera singer, and he must have had more than average awareness of the peculiar pronunciation of Mandarin, such as the tones. A good feeling for music was considered a favourable condition for learning Chinese. Hoffmann had never been in China, so from whom did he learn to pronounce Mandarin? His teacher Ko Tsching-dschang (Guo Chengzhang), who was in Leiden in 1830–1835, was a Hakka from Eastern Guangdong, who could speak Malay, but probably not Mandarin. In his manuscript dictionary, Hoffmann added Mandarin and some Cantonese transcriptions of the characters, but he sometimes also referred to the Hakka pronunciation of Ko Tsching-dschang which was written in red ink. He probably learnt how to pronounce from the description of the sounds in books. In his reports on students, he seldom referred to the quality of the pronunciation. He only once stated that Schlegel was very fast in learning “both the characters and the pronunciation.” Knowing the ‘pronunciation’ of a character probably meant not much more than knowing its transcription and being able to utter sounds vaguely reminiscent of the Mandarin

pronunciation. This was probably similar to the way in which European classical languages such as Latin and Greek were pronounced by modern Europeans—that is, according to conventions, not according to the original sounds which were actually unknown.

Grammars and dictionaries

Probably after the students had learnt enough characters and read basic texts, Hoffmann taught Chinese grammar in a systematic way, making use of Abel Rémusat's *Éléments de la grammaire chinoise*, together with Prémare's *Notitia* and Morrison's *Grammar*. As Rémusat's grammar was out of print in 1855, Schlegel copied it for himself by hand, together with Hoffmann's notes. In those days, the students wrote an attractive hand—if not, they took calligraphy lessons—and they did a lot of copying. In the end of 1855, Hoffmann compiled a manuscript grammar with criticism of the earlier grammars for Schlegel, with many examples from the older and newer literature,¹⁸⁸ which was later also studied and copied by other students. After Schott's *Chinesische Sprachlehre* was published in 1857, Hoffmann first used that grammar in his teaching. Buddingh, Groeneveldt, and De Breuk bought Schott's grammar first and Rémusat's grammar a few months later. Some chapters of a later version of Hoffmann's grammar copied by Schaalje are still kept in the Leiden University Library. One of these is dated 10 February 1859. These chapters contain very detailed explanations of the uses of some classical and modern particles (於, 之, 可, 所, 以, 而, 得, etc.); often references are made to other Chinese grammars and to other languages such as French, German, English, Latin, and Japanese. Schaalje also copied an alphabetic list of Mandarin classifiers with explanations and examples (*see* illustrations 2-3).¹⁸⁹ Another, shorter grammar is a partial Dutch translation of Schott's grammar with notes by Hoffmann, which is also dated 1859. It is in Groeneveldt's elegant handwriting and bound between the pages of Schott's grammar.¹⁹⁰ From 1858 on, Hoffmann also used Edkins' grammar, a copy of which was sent to him by De Grijs from Amoy. He even preferred this grammar to Prémare's *Notitia*.¹⁹¹ With his classical training, Hoffmann was expert at grammatical analysis, and thus he gave his students a powerful instrument with which to understand Chinese texts. Forty years later, Groeneveldt would state that he continued to have great profit from Hoffmann's lessons.¹⁹² On the other hand, some of his elaborate discussions on grammar with quotations from various scholars seem to make the language more complex than it actually is.

In his master plan, Hoffmann made a clear distinction between the classical and the colloquial language, but in his teaching, both were con-



2. From Schaalje's list of measure words (BPL 2106 I 4).

sidered mere variants of the written language. In his reports he seems to refer to this distinction only once, when he wrote that he would teach De Grijs “the characteristics of different branches of Chinese literature, in particular what one should learn to be able to read Chinese books on natural history.”¹⁹³

The real colloquial, spoken language was not taught by Hoffmann, who had never been in China and could not speak any Chinese dialect of the colloquial language.¹⁹⁴ There is a touching anecdote which substantiates this. When Hoffmann met the Chinese doctor Liu Noni in Amsterdam in 1861, at first neither uttered a word of greeting. They could only communicate in writing. Hoffmann wrote a Chinese greeting with chalk on the table, whereupon Liu Noni, who had not been able to speak with anyone for months, almost cried with joy.¹⁹⁵

Hoffmann compiled an elementary Chinese–Dutch dictionary for Schlegel and De Grijs. Like his Chinese grammar, it only existed in man-



3. From Schaaljé's copy of Hoffmann's grammar, the particle suǒ 所 (BPL 2106 I 3B). "Het lijdende iets kan wanneer het onderwerp is, ook 者 tschê, als Exponent van zijne logische waarde na zich hebben."

uscript and was copied by each student. It contained the vocabulary of the texts that they had read, with Hoffmann's lexical explanations. Hoffmann's copy is still extant and has the title “*Wèn tszé yáo-liǎo* [*Wenzi yaolüe*] 文字要略, *schinesisches Handwörterbuch*. Bearbeitet von Dr. J. Hoffmann, Leiden 1849–1854.” It consists of a large stack (22 centimeters tall) of small cards, written in German. There is also one copy by a student: St. Aulaire's Dutch copy, which is also a stack (10 centimeters) of about 800 larger cards.¹⁹⁶ Francken's copy was donated after his death to the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences.¹⁹⁷ Studying and copying this dictionary became an important item in the study of Chinese. In February 1864, when Meeter had studied for 1½ years, his father wrote to the Minister that his son was “already studying and writing out the Chinese dictionary.”¹⁹⁸ Besides this manuscript dictionary, they also used those by Morrison, Medhurst, and others. Buddingh and Groeneveldt bought Medhurst's dictionary from their stipends,¹⁹⁹ while the earlier students bought it from their book allowances (see Chapter Three).

Textbooks: books of sayings

From the various sources, some of the Chinese texts which Hoffmann used are known, and his teaching methods can also be reconstructed to some extent. In his first report on Schlegel in 1853, Hoffmann wrote that he read texts on natural history and could translate some works by Confucius. A few months later, Hoffmann reported that Schlegel was studying the *Taishang ganying pian* 太上感應篇 and was learning it by heart as he was accustomed to do with Chinese texts.²⁰⁰ This popular Taoist classic was in the nature of a collection of sayings summing up a great variety of acts of good and bad behaviour, which would be punished or rewarded in this life or within one's family. The book is ascribed to an author from the Song dynasty (960–1279). Later commentators added explanations of words, and stories as proof and illustrations of retribution. This book was also popular in the West; it had been translated and reproduced several times.²⁰¹ There were translations by Rémusat (1816), J. Klaproth (1828), Ch.F. Neumann (1830) and Julien (1835).²⁰² Julien's translation also contained the explanations and stories, and the main text in Chinese. The Chinese text was published also in lithography by Klaproth as the first item in the book *Chrestomathie chinoise* (Chinese anthology), Paris 1834.²⁰³ Under Hoffmann, De Grijns also studied it and reviewed it together with Schlegel. While doing so, De Grijns copied the Chinese text and Julien's translation, adding a literal Dutch translation.²⁰⁴ One method of learning Chinese was to make a new foreign-language or Dutch translation of a book that had already been translated into French, German,

or English. De Grijns used the French translation only for reference; in general he did not translate from the French, but from the Chinese. His translations were very literal and made clear the structure of the Chinese sentences. An example of this is 禍福無門，惟人自召 “misfortune and fortune have no (fixed) gates (through which they enter); only man summons them himself” (*ongeluk en geluk (heil en onheil) hebben geene (bepaalde) poorten (waardoor zij binnendringen), alleen de mensch roept ze zelve.*) The French translation was more free and idiomatic: “Le malheur et le bonheur de l’homme ne sont point déterminés d’avance; seulement l’homme s’attire lui-même l’un et l’autre par sa conduite” (no. 1). Another example shows that De Grijns’ literal translation sometimes clarified the grammatical structure, but not the meaning, which is typical of the beginning student: 離人骨肉，侵人所愛 “separate flesh and bone of others, take possession of what others like to have” (*vleesch en been van anderen vaneen scheiden, datgene bemachtigen wat andere gaarne hebben*). The French translation was again more free and idiomatic: “Séparer les parens qui sont unis comme la chair et les os, s’emparer des choses auxquelles les autres hommes sont attachés” (no. 11).

After about a year of study, De Grijns read ‘200 sayings.’²⁰⁵ This probably refers to a collection of 198 sayings, *Xishi xianwen* 昔時賢文 (Wise words from ancient times), which Hoffmann had printed for his students in lithography, in his own calligraphy. There existed a Chinese schoolbook with the same title since the Ming dynasty. Three copies of the lithographic text are kept in Leiden University Library, one of which has also De Grijns’ Mandarin transcriptions, and literal translations into Dutch on inserted leaves; in his copy two sayings were added, so the total number of sayings is 200.²⁰⁶ This rather elliptic text is not always easy to translate (*see illustration 4*).

There was another collection of 200 sayings, which Hoffmann studied and retranslated with Francken and Schlegel. This was J.F. Davis’ *Hien Wun Shoo* 賢文書 (A book of wise words), *Chinese moral maxims*, Macau 1823, which contained the Chinese texts and English translations of quotations collected by Davis from classical and colloquial literature.²⁰⁷ The Leiden University Library has Schlegel’s manuscript copy of this book, with golden rimmed pages and bound in leather. It contains the Chinese text and Dutch, German, and (Davis’) English translations, grammatical notes by Hoffmann and a character index made by Schlegel and Francken dated 1857 (*see illustration 5*).

Hoffmann’s introduction gives some insight into his teaching methods and the atmosphere in his classes. Hoffmann wrote that forty years after Davis’ translation was published, he considered it worthwhile to make a new translation of the sayings, since French and English sinologists had in the meantime gained a much better understanding of the Chinese language

45

"Though a tree may be a thousand
chang in height, its leaves must
 fall down and return to its root."

dei'm	jin	忍	Bear, sustain
tik	ke	得	care
it	yi	一	one
si	schü	時	hours
ki'	ki'	氣	anger,
bi'en	mi'en	免	prevent
tik	ke	得	care
pi'ik	pe'	百	hundred
di't	ji'	日	days
in	yeu.	憂	sorrow

Vor ~~bedürft~~ ^{Bedürft} man geduldig eines ~~andern~~ ^{andern}
 drißt gedurende ein nur, so bespaart
 man sich sorgen vor 100 (viele) Tagen.
 Erträgt man geduldig eines andern
 kürre (Aufwallung), so bringt man
 länger Sorge vor.

5. Schlegel's translation of Davis' Chinese Moral Maxims, with Mandarin and later added Hokkien pronunciations; note Schlegel's correction (BPL 2044).

and Hoffmann's own studies had also yielded (new) rules of the language (*taalwetten*). Now he and his students tried to apply these rules in a consistent way, putting them to the test at the same time, which—according to him—often resulted in better translations. His conclusion was:

I hope that our new edition of Davis' collection may be a guide (*leidsvrouw*) for our young students of the Chinese language, that will at the same time remind them of many pleasant hours.²⁰⁸

Indeed, the literal translations by Hoffmann and his students are better than the literal ones by Davis, but not as good as his idiomatic translations. Like De Grijs' translations, Hoffmann's were more literal, more faithful to the original, and showed the grammatical structure more clearly, but they sometimes missed the point. For example: *sangtiao cong xiao rou* 桑條從小揉 “The twigs of the mulberry are bent from youth.” (*De takken van den moerbezienboom worden van jongs afgebogen*). Davis translated literally: “Mulberry / slip / accords with / it's youthful / bent” and idiomatically: “As the twig is bent, the tree's inclined.”²⁰⁹ Many years later, Schlegel also used this book for teaching Chinese to his students, adding Hokkien transcriptions. From the 1870s on, Hokkien pronunciation was taught in Leiden, not Mandarin. He sometimes also added good idiomatic translations, showing that Dutch sinology had made some progress. In this case he added: “One should bend the twig when it is young” (*Men moet het rijsje buigen als het jong is*) and “Youngsters should be taught (bent) from youth” (*Jongelieden moeten van jongs af aan onderwezen (gebogen) worden*).²¹⁰

Groeneveldt en Buddingh must have studied this text as well. Groeneveldt later recounted the following anecdote to his younger colleague Van der Spek:

Once, Hoffmann sent his students to the Minister with Davis' maxims under their arm. In order to make a good impression, he first instructed them how to behave. Groeneveldt played the Minister, and Hoffmann played Groeneveldt. It was all serious.²¹¹

Of course, this kind of play-acting would not have contributed to clearing up the misunderstanding concerning their Japanese studies between the Ministry and Hoffmann.

Natural history, short stories, and the Four Books

Not surprisingly, Hoffmann also studied texts on natural history with his students. For instance, De Grijs read “a description of the heavens in the large Japanese encyclopaedia,” and “shorter texts from the natural history of birds.” These were taken from the Sino-Japanese encyclopaedia *Wa-*

kan Sansai Zue 和漢三才圖會.²¹² In this case, the students made original translations, not retranslations. In the Leiden University Library there are kept several notebooks by Hoffmann's students with texts on animals and plants that were copied from this encyclopaedia, with added Mandarin transcription and Dutch translation. These notebooks belonged to De Grijs, Schaalje, and St. Aulaire.²¹³ The translations are again very literal, but usually correct and clear. Some examples of the texts that they studied are the following. De Grijs translated a description of *shuyu* 薯蕷, 'the Chinese yam' (see illustration 6). This plant was recommended by some as a substitute for the potato, and in 1854, Hoffmann also wrote an article on it, making use of the same text, thereby showing that research can profit from teaching (or vice versa). De Grijs also translated a piece on *yancao* 煙草, 'tobacco,' probably an attractive subject for the older students. Schaalje translated texts on *qiuyin* 蚯蚓, 'the earthworm,' and *pugongying* 蒲公英, 'the dandelion.' St. Aulaire translated the same text on tobacco and descriptions of birds, mammals, and Japanese seafood such as *ganfu* 乾鰓 'dried awaki' (Haliotis).

De Grijs also read 'short stories,' for instance "Nian'er niang" 廿二娘²¹⁴ (Miss Number 22) from *Jingu qiguan* 今古奇觀. His notebook with a manuscript Chinese text, transcription, and translation is still kept in the Leiden University Library.²¹⁵ There is a similar notebook by Schaalje.²¹⁶ And there is a hard-cover notebook by Schlegel, in which he copied the Chinese text in large characters with a German translation by Hoffmann dated 1857, and another German translation by Böttger. This story had been translated before into English by Robert Thom in 1839, and that translation had been translated into German by Adolf Böttger in 1845.²¹⁷ This is another example of how Hoffmann made use of an earlier translation in his teaching. It is a typical ghost story about love and revenge, which recounted how a certain Zhang Yi stayed in a haunted room at an inn, where he was visited by a beautiful girl for three nights. Thereupon Zhang heard from the landlord that a girl had hanged herself in that room. The next night, the girl told him that she was that person. She had been a prostitute, named Miss Number 22. In the past, she had had a lover, to whom she entrusted all her savings, and when he betrayed her, she hanged herself. Then it developed that Zhang and the ex-lover were from the same town. After some time, Zhang announced that he wished to go home, whereupon she asked him to write her name on a soul-tablet and take it with him; the girl would appear as soon as he called her name in front of the tablet. When he arrived in his home town and summoned her, she told him she wished to collect a debt. That day her ex-lover, who was married and ran a prosperous shop, died of a sudden, awful disease. From then on, the ghost disappeared forever.

This was the only somewhat 'colloquial' text that was evidently read by

Hoffmann's students, apart from some colloquial sayings in Davis' *Chinese Moral Maxims*. The students must also have read other texts. In his master plan, Hoffmann mentioned some Chinese texts with French or Latin translations by Julien. These books were bought by the students from their book allowances, but there is no evidence that they read them with Hoffmann. Schlegel was also given a certain textbook for youngsters to translate independently; it is not known which book this was. In Schlegel's personal copy of the *Four Books* (see below), the first chapter of *Mencius* was punctuated by Hoffmann, and the *Great Learning* was crudely punctuated, probably by himself. So it can be assumed that he then studied these as well. This also applies to the last four students, who all bought copies of the *Four Books*.

Chinese books in Leiden

At this time, Leiden University Library possessed at most only about 40 Chinese books, and Hoffmann himself owned about 100 Chinese books.²¹⁸ Besides, the collection of about 500 'Japanese' books of Von Siebold described in the Catalogue by Hoffmann²¹⁹ comprised about 80 books in Chinese, of which 35 were Japanese reprints of original Chinese books. One of these Sino-Japanese books was the *Wakan Sansai Zue* mentioned above. And there was also a collection of about 40 Chinese books in the Royal Cabinet of Rarities in The Hague.

On 14 May 1855, at the meeting of Department of Arts of the Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences, Hoffmann²²⁰ proposed "to purchase a selection of Chinese works and to concentrate all Chinese books in public institutions [in the Netherlands] in one place, preferably in Leiden." He also suggested publishing sinological works and purchasing a set of Chinese type for this purpose. A commission composed of T. Roorda, A. Rutgers, and C. Leemans²²¹ studied Hoffmann's proposals, and sent in a report on 18 June 1855. They considered it not yet urgently necessary to buy Chinese books, since there was an exquisite collection of Chinese and Japanese books, with which the most urgent needs of beginning students could be satisfied. These were kept in the Leiden University Library or were in Hoffmann's own possession or within his reach (Von Siebold's 'Japanese' books were also kept in Leiden). The rest of Hoffmann's proposal was accepted, and in 1860 Leiden would have a set of Chinese type and books could be published. But one part of his first proposal was also realised: in 1856, the Chinese and Japanese books of the Royal Academy of Arts and Sciences were given on permanent loan to Leiden University.²²² In 1859 the Chinese and Japanese books from the Royal Cabinet of Rarities were moved to the newly established Von Siebold Museum in Leiden, the pre-

decessor of the National Ethnographical Museum, where they were later incorporated in Von Siebold's collection in 1860.

The students had hardly any Chinese books. Sometimes Hoffmann gave his students a Chinese book as a present. For instance, he gave De Grijs copies of the primers *Sanzijing*, *Qianziwen* and *Youxueshi*, bound together in a Western-style hard cover,²²³ in which he wrote in Dutch "For Mr. ... F. de Grijs, from his friend Dr. J. Hoffmann, Leiden June 1st, 1855."²²⁴ This was just after Hoffmann had decided that De Grijs could leave. A few weeks later, on 25 June 1855, he left for the Indies. A year later, on Schlegel's sixteenth birthday, Hoffmann gave him the second part of *Mencius*, which was also bound in a Western-style hard cover, with the French text "Offert à Mr. G. Schlegel, par J. Hoffmann, Leide le 30 Sept., 1856."²²⁵ In the last quarter of 1859, Buddingh, Groeneveldt, and De Breuk each bought a copy of the *Four Books* in Chinese from Hoffmann for f2, which they had bound in two hard-cover volumes for f0.40.²²⁶ In 1862 De Breuk also bought a few Chinese books for f1.50,²²⁷ while Meeter later bought a copy of *Mencius* for f12.²²⁸ The fact that these were all such elementary books, reveals not only the level of these students, but also that at the time a Chinese book was a rare possession.

Japanese studies

When the students were sufficiently advanced in Chinese, Hoffmann would start teaching them Japanese; for instance, he taught Schlegel Japanese after De Grijs had left in June 1855. He first taught him the Japanese *katakana* syllabary and the method by which Chinese characters were combined with that syllabary. He also taught these to Francken and Schaalje.²²⁹ For his later students of Japanese, he made use of Donker Curtius' Japanese grammar. De Breuk also bought Alcock's grammar in 1862.²³⁰ After one year of Chinese studies, when Buddingh and Groeneveldt were advanced enough in Chinese to be able to read and understand texts, Hoffmann began to teach them Japanese. From then on, Chinese characters in Chinese texts were pronounced in Japanese fashion to train the students to become completely accustomed to the Sino-Japanese pronunciation. It should be noted that when these students arrived in China and started to learn Hokkien and Hakka, they certainly profited from their knowledge of these pronunciations. So from the perspective of Chinese studies, the time which they spent on Japanese was not wasted.

