



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

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

Kuiper, P.N.

Citation

Kuiper, P. N. (2016, February 16). *The Early Dutch Sinologists : a study of their training in Holland and China, and their functions in the Netherlands Indies (1854-1900)*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/37999>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/37999>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/37999> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation.

Author: Kuiper, Pieter Nicolaas

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

Issue Date: 2016-02-16

CHAPTER EIGHT

SCHLEGEL AND HIS STUDENTS IN LEIDEN (1873–1878)

Schlegel's proposal for a new training course in Leiden (1873)

Schlegel left Batavia for a two-year sick leave on 20 June 1872 and probably arrived in the Netherlands six weeks later, in August 1872. After ten years of service as a Chinese interpreter in Batavia, Schlegel must have decided it would be better, both for sinology and for his own health, not to return to the Indies but to stay in Europe to train interpreters there. Probably by the end of February 1873, he had a meeting with G.Th.H. Henny, Secretary General of the Ministry of Colonies, an old acquaintance who had worked for ten years as a lawyer in Batavia at the same time as Schlegel and also returned to the Netherlands in 1872.¹ It was probably at this meeting that Schlegel presented Henny with two documents, a “*nota* concerning the training of Chinese student-translators”² and his *Curriculum Vitae*.³ By offering these documents, Schlegel basically requested the establishment of a professorship in Leiden for himself to train Chinese interpreters for the Indies.

In the *nota*, he recollected that the training of the first Chinese student-translators had been entrusted to professor Hoffmann, and that he himself and Francken were the first two students sent from the Netherlands to China for further study. But already in 1860, the government had decided that in future, aspirant-interpreters should be trained by the interpreters in the Indies and continue in China, where they should concentrate on the Guangdong and Fujian dialects (*Cantonsche en Fokiansche dialecten*). Schlegel now criticised his former teacher:

Professor Hoffmann's training in the Netherlands soon proved inadequate for service in the Netherlands Indies. Although the said professor can be fully trusted to teach the Chinese written language, it was of course less feasible for him to teach the dialects spoken in the Netherlands Indies, because Mr. Hoffmann only understands the dialect called Mandarin, which is spoken in the northern provinces of China, while in the Netherlands Indies dialects from the southern provinces of Fujian and Guangdong are spoken.⁴

Consequently, all of Hoffmann's students had to stay in China for several years before they were qualified for service in the Indies. According to Schlegel, this problem was solved in 1870 by the ministerial resolution to have the training of Chinese interpreters take place in the Indies. In 1871, Schlegel had been charged with the training of the first aspirant Roelofs,

which he could not finish since he was obliged to take sick leave in Europe in the following year. Although training in the Indies had certain advantages, there were also great objections, in particular the hot climate and heavy work load of the interpreters (*see* Chapter Seven), but Schlegel also took it up for youngsters in the Netherlands who might wish to study Chinese and have a career as interpreter in the Indies. Since the examination could only be taken in the Indies, they would have to proceed there first, and chances to be accepted were not high, since it was a competitive examination and the government only allowed two students to be trained at a time. This could be solved if there were an opportunity to take the entrance examination in the Netherlands. But, according to Schlegel, the greatest objection would be that if they passed the examination and went to the Indies, it might happen that the Chinese interpreter teaching him after four years of study would discover that the candidate was unsuited to learn Chinese ever—such cases existed⁵—and he would have lost precious time, and would be obliged to return to the Netherlands to undertake a different professional training.

In the Indies, “the already small corps of Chinese interpreters is threatened with imminent extinction,”⁶ since three of the original ten interpreters had passed away, two were on sick leave for two years, and one was stationed in China, leaving only four interpreters in active service. Moreover, there was only one aspirant-interpreter, Roelofs, who would need another three or four years of study.⁷ According to Schlegel, it therefore seemed desirable and fair to Dutch youngsters wishing to learn Chinese to create an opportunity for aspirant-interpreters to study Chinese in the Netherlands. The training could be assigned to one of the older Chinese interpreters in the Indies, who could be stationed in the Netherlands and obtain the title of ‘professor of modern Chinese’ (*Hoogleeraar in het hedendaagsch Chineesch*).⁸ At the same time, this interpreter should be considered an East Indies official to be paid from the Colonial budget. Professor Hoffmann could be charged with the training of aspirant-interpreters for the Dutch consulates in China, since these officials were to learn Mandarin.

In his *Curriculum Vitae*, Schlegel gave a short account of his studies in Leiden and China, including his contributions to the Museum of Natural History; he gave some examples of his work as an interpreter and advisor in the Indies. He mentioned his major publications and their reviews in international journals, as well as his doctorate in philosophy from the University of Jena.⁹

At his meeting with Henny, Schlegel probably handed in his *nota* and C.V. In any case, he was directed to submit a suitably argued proposal for his permanent transfer to the Netherlands. On 2 March 1873, Schlegel complied with these instructions and wrote a letter to Henny with concrete suggestions and some additions.

He argued that it was obviously desirable to create an opportunity to

train Chinese interpreters in the Netherlands, since experience had shown that there were very few candidates in the Indies and therefore the corps of Chinese interpreters was threatened with extinction. He asked the Minister to transfer him permanently to the Netherlands with the special assignment of training Chinese interpreters. The training could take place in the same manner as had been done in Batavia, but the Minister's resolution of 1870¹⁰ should then be changed so that the training of more than two students was assigned to a professor in Leiden. In addition, the opportunity to study in the Indies should be abolished. In Leiden the students should receive a monthly stipend of *f* 50 (as before) instead of the *f* 150 in the Indies. Preparatory measures could be taken immediately, involving official announcements in the newspapers for candidates who could take a similar examination as in Batavia.

Schlegel was also willing to teach a course in Chinese Language, Geography and Ethnology at the Indies Institute in Leiden.¹¹ In this way, the candidate-officials who would in the Indies certainly come into contact with the Chinese, would obtain some basic knowledge about the nature, customs, and religious practices of the Chinese, who were so important for [the economy of] the Indies. Therefore Schlegel suggested conferring on him the title of Professor of Chinese Language, Geography and Ethnology (*Hoogleeraar in de Chinesche Taal-, Land- en Volkenkunde*),¹² on a fixed yearly salary of 5,000 guilders.¹³

Finally, he notified Secretary General Henny that he had been recommended for the vacancy of professor of Chinese language at the Collège de France, after the death of Stanislas Julien. He added a copy of the letter of recommendation from the French Minister of the Navy and the Colonies, Admiral Pothuan. In this position, he would receive a salary of 10 to 12 thousand Francs. The French letter stated that Schlegel was prepared to be naturalised in France, which was a clear indication of his willingness to take this position. It was not so strange that a French Admiral should recommend Schlegel: in 1860 Schlegel and Francken had shown their qualities as Chinese-French interpreters for the French Navy in Amoy (*see* Chapter Three).

The argument of a position offered abroad is similar to the one used in Hoffmann's case both in 1846 and 1855—although it was not mentioned by Hoffmann himself—and it is tempting to think that Schlegel chose the right moment for his proposal. Stanislas Julien had been ill for a long time, and during the last year his courses had been taught by d'Hervey de Saint-Denys. On 14 February 1873, Julien finally passed away, and Schlegel made his proposal little more than two weeks later. Schlegel stated that there was "no proficient French sinologist" to take Julien's position, and in fact, d'Hervey de Saint-Denys, who had never been in China, was considered unqualified by some; he later even had to defend his qualifications at

a court of law. Nevertheless, d'Hervey de Saint-Denys would later succeed Julien at the Collège de France.¹⁴

On 25 March, Bureau Aaz¹⁵ of the Ministry of Colonies sent an extensive *nota* to Secretary General Henny with comments and suggestions on Schlegel's proposal. It began with a historical outline starting from 1853, based on the archives of the Ministry, which were kept for the purpose of informing the officials of the Ministry.¹⁶ The Bureau was clearly better informed than Schlegel, who probably only possessed copies of decisions concerning himself. The Bureau found that Schlegel's representation of the matter was not always correct. It was out of the question that Hoffmann's training was defective, since this was in accordance with the original plan: to teach Mandarin in Leiden and another dialect in China. Hoffmann had also concluded that this was the only correct method, and if he was wrong, this should be proven. Schlegel had not shown that the study of Mandarin before learning another dialect could be omitted.¹⁷

According to Schlegel, the objection had been solved in the resolution of 1870. But in fact there was no relation between Hoffmann's method and that resolution. There had never been any objection in the Indies against his training, and from the start it was decided that the interpreters should after their own appointment train others. In 1870, only the conditions of this training had been regulated, on the assumption that the students would be directly taught in the dialect to be used later (without explicitly excluding Mandarin) and they would also study in China for one year.

A point of criticism of Schlegel's proposal was that he could only teach the dialect of Java (Hokkien), and not that of the Outer Possessions (Hakka). There was no constant need for new interpreters; therefore only two were trained at a time, and if they had started to train others in the Indies in time, there would not have been a shortage (*incomplete*). How could a professor be appointed with a yearly salary of f5,000 for just two students? Schlegel wrote that he did not have enough time to train others in the Indies, but perhaps another interpreter outside Batavia would have more time.

There were also advantages in studying in the Indies; in Leiden one could not find a single Chinese, and the training would stagnate if Schlegel became ill and lacked the assistance of a Chinese teacher (note in the margin). Actually, the danger of being found unsuitable after four years of study was not so great, and youngsters would not go to the Indies to be trained as interpreters without being tested. There were just enough candidates in the Indies, and it had taken too much time to organise the course, from 1865 to 1870, partly because those concerned had too late given thought to the decision of 1864 (regarding the obligatory competitive examination for government-subsidised training courses).

Bureau Aaz earnestly advised against the proposal to appoint a professor at f5,000 for two youngsters in a dialect only spoken on Java. However, the

argument that by appointing Schlegel (to give a training course) in Leiden again an interpreter would be withdrawn from service in the Indies was not valid, since Schlegel would otherwise leave for France. And it would be strange to appoint another professor at f5,000 alongside Hoffmann who earned only f3,000, but this would not be a crucial point if all else pleaded for Schlegel. An extraordinary measure could be desirable as an experiment, and several options were mentioned, such as to start with Mandarin, to have the course taught by Hoffmann, Schlegel, or Schaalje, etc. An argument against Hoffmann was that he was expected to die soon.¹⁸

On 1 April 1873, Secretary General Henny wrote to Schlegel that there were not enough reasons to appoint a professor in Leiden on the Colonial budget. There was a shortage of interpreters because the interpreters had not in time been charged to train others. As a rule, two students would be sufficient. In 1868 the number of candidates in the Indies was large enough, and in 1871 and 1872 the maximum number of two had been attained. A professor should only be appointed if there was no alternative; as a rule the interpreters should be trained in the Indies first. But Minister Fransen van de Putte would be prepared to create a special facility, and if Hoffmann could not undertake it because of ill health, his work on his Japanese dictionary, or because he could only teach Mandarin, the Minister would be happy to make use of Schlegel's services during his period of leave, which could be extended. As to the questions of the need to teach Mandarin and of the dialect to be chosen—preferably that of the Outer Possessions, which could not be taught by Hoffmann or Schlegel—the Minister asked Schlegel to think this over in consultation with Hoffmann, and preferably to advise jointly with him. For Hoffmann the Minister also had a question: could one make use of the youngsters who were being taught Chinese and Japanese by him now? As an appendix, Henny sent a copy of Hoffmann's advice of 9 December 1853.

Schlegel's and Hoffmann's advice

One week after Secretary General Henny's request, on 9 April 1873, Hoffmann and Schlegel sent an even more elaborate advice to Henny: Hoffmann contributed 4 pages and Schlegel 27. Hoffmann first stated that the arguments (*stellingen*) in his 1853 report on Chinese language studies in Europe were still valid after twenty years: in Europe only the so-called Mandarin language (*Mandarijnentaal*) was taught, and the student would learn other dialects only later, when he came in contact with Chinese. But if it were necessary to communicate with the Chinese population of Java and the Outer Possessions, who spoke Fujian dialects from Amoy and Zhangzhou—this had now been definitively established—the Amoy

dialect should be the initial gateway for the interpreter being trained for service in the Indies. Twenty years ago there had been no opportunity for this in Europe, but during the last few years this had become the course followed on Java. The teaching started with the Amoy dialect, and this could be done in the Netherlands as well, since the eminent sinologist Dr. G. Schlegel was now here, and he knew the Amoy dialect.

On the other hand, the student who would devote himself to the Amoy dialect under the guidance of this linguist, should sooner or later also learn Mandarin (*Mandarijnsch*), either to restore the connection of his own knowledge with general sinological scholarship—he could not do without its sources and tools—or in order to serve as an interpreter in contacts with the Chinese government. It would be the same as a native of Amoy who learned Mandarin because he had to know that dialect in order to pass the examinations to become eligible for government service. Hoffmann added the example of Groeneveldt, who was stationed at the Dutch Consulate in Shanghai and was now studying Mandarin.

In short, he advised learning the Amoy dialect, since in this way the student would directly be trained as an interpreter for Java, and this did not exclude his later studying Mandarin. Hoffmann wrote that he and Schlegel agreed on these points.

As to the question posed to Hoffmann alone, he answered that two bachelors of law (*jur. candidaten*), W. Vissering and P. Maclaine Pont, were regularly attending his classes in Chinese language and literature. They planned to profit from this later in the Indies, and also to devote themselves to scholarship, but they did not wish to be trained as interpreters. There was also a very promising student of Japanese, the candidate-notary L. Serrurier. His purpose was to find a position in Japan. Despite his ill health, Hoffmann spent a lot of time and energy teaching them, and all this without remuneration.

Taking Hoffmann's words as a starting point, Schlegel added that as to the question whether the aspirant-interpreters for the Indies should learn 'the so-called Mandarin dialect,' (*het zoogenaamde Mandarijnsch*), since all Chinese in the Indies were Netherlands Indies subjects (*onderdanen*), they were not ruled by Mandarins, and the Mandarin dialect was nowhere spoken in the Indies. The interpreter would only come into contact with a population speaking Southern Chinese dialects. For that reason, he never taught Mandarin.

Only recently had more attention been paid to the Southern dialects, and it was now recognised that they retained better, and in purer form, many features of the old Chinese language dating from before the formation of Mandarin. In the past, these dialects were seen as corruptions of Mandarin, while the opposite was true. This misconception was caused by the contempt shown for these dialects by Mandarin-speaking officials, which had been taken over by the British. As a result, in Europe it was con-

sidered useful and necessary only to learn Mandarin. It was thought that all civilised Chinese from other provinces spoke Mandarin, just as all civilised Germans could speak High German. Actually, Mandarin was only studied by those who needed it when they became officials, and Schlegel had even met quite a few Mandarins who could not understand Mandarin.

In this respect, scholarship had taken a step forward, but knowledge about the dialects spoken in the Colonies had increased as well. Originally, extremely vague terminology such as 'Cantonese' and 'Fujianese' had been used; the former was thought to be spoken in the Outer Possessions, the latter on Java. Consequently, several student-interpreters had wasted a lot of time and energy learning Cantonese (*see* Chapter Three). When this mistake finally came out, the government considered Hakka the dialect of the Outer Possessions, although it was actually only spoken in Pontianak and Mentok, and all students were ordered to study Hakka. When it later became evident that there were not enough places where Hakka was spoken, De Breuk (who had learnt Hakka) was stationed in Cirebon on Java, where Hokkien was spoken. Likewise, Groeneveldt was transferred from Pontianak to Padang, a Hokkien-speaking region, and he had to learn Hokkien in a month before going there—actually he only had to brush it up. And on Bangka, five different dialects were spoken, so five interpreters would be needed.

There had been the greatest confusion concerning the dialects spoken in the Indies, and after ten bitter years at the expense of the interpreters who were tossed around, only now could it be said with certainty which dialects were current. Except in Pontianak, one could use Hokkien everywhere, and this dialect should be the basis for all interpreters in the Indies. Everywhere else in the Colonies, the Hakkas all learned to speak the main dialect: Hokkien.

The Minister was of the opinion that since already two aspirant-interpreters, Roelofs and Young, were being taught Hokkien, the next group of students should learn Hakka. However, in Batavia, Cirebon, Semarang, and Surabaya only Hokkien was spoken, and in Riau and Padang mainly Hokkien, while Hakka dialects were spoken more in Pontianak and Mentok, and therefore the proportion Hokkien : Hakka should be 6 : 2 instead of 2 : 2.

Because of his ten years of experience as a Hokkien interpreter in Batavia, Schlegel believed he had sufficiently proven that he was qualified to teach Hokkien.

Now there remained two questions:

1. Would it be sufficient to train only two students?
2. Could one find enough suitable candidates in the Indies?

Before the resolution of 1870 was made, the Governor-General had consulted the civil authorities in the regions with a large Chinese population about the need of Chinese interpreters. Many of them reported that they did not need an interpreter.¹⁹ In Schlegel's and his colleagues' expe-

rience, the interpreters were often regarded as snoopers (*dwarsskijkers*),²⁰ who because of their knowledge of Chinese affairs and the trust given to them by the Chinese, learned about many affairs that the government preferred not to become known. Only the judicial authorities, not the civil authorities, made active use of the interpreters to clear up the endless malversations (*knoeierijen*) of the Chinese. Therefore it was no wonder that the Governor-General considered eight to ten interpreters sufficient.²¹

In a counter-attack, Schlegel continued that according to his experience, which was supported by influential and well-informed persons in the Indies, in those districts where the majority of the population was Chinese such as Bangka, Riau, and Pontianak, only officials who were fully acquainted with the Chinese language, manners and customs should be appointed as heads of regional government.

Schlegel gave examples of how conflicts could have been avoided if the highest civil authorities had understood the Chinese better. The interpreter's position should also be strengthened, and he should be given an active role in the formation of the Chinese Council.

The death rate among his colleagues was high; several others went on sick leave, and one went to China, leaving four interpreters in the Indies, of whom one, De Grijns, would be eligible for a pension within two years, after twenty years of service.²² It would therefore not suffice to train only two students to fill the gaps; the number of students should be much larger.

As to the second question, whether enough candidates could be found in the Indies, Schlegel's answer was strongly negative. He explained in detail the low quality and wrong motivation of almost all candidates in the Indies, concluding that the Indies were not the place to find enough suitable candidates (*see* Chapter Seven).

Finally, he again mentioned his willingness to teach a course in Chinese Language, Geography, and Ethnology at the Indies Institute in Leiden, explaining the importance of the Chinese for the Indies, and concluding:

About this element, which is so important for the Indies, the East Indies officials *know nothing*. There are circulating the most ludicrous ideas about them. They have no understanding of their religion, their peculiar manners and customs, their economy, and least of all of their language. And as a result, serious mistakes are being made with respect to them, and governing the Chinese causes problems in many places, while the Chinese are a people most easy to govern. Several conflicts have been prevented by my colleagues Schaalje and Groeneveldt in Riau and Pontianak only because of their knowledge of the Chinese language and manners, and would *without* their intervention have given rise to serious riots.²³

Another requirement for the training programme was the compilation of handbooks to learn the Amoy dialect. Anybody who knew how an Englishman spells foreign words would realise that English handbooks did

more harm than good. Francken's dictionary was at the press in Batavia, but the whole process was extremely slow and Von Faber had refused to correct the proofs.²⁴ Therefore it was highly necessary to continue the printing in Holland, since the Netherlands only had Chinese type in Batavia and Leiden. It would be necessary for Schlegel to stay here to do the corrections. Moreover, the handbook which he had been preparing for Roelofs could also be printed here, as well as Francken's collection of 2,000 Chinese sayings. And Schlegel disclosed that he himself had already been working on a Dutch–Chinese dictionary for fifteen years, which was not yet ready for the press because he did not have enough time in the Indies.

To sum up: in order to train a good body of Chinese interpreters, they should be given the necessary tools sooner than could have been done before. The interpreters in the Indies did not have the time to compile these. For all these reasons, it would be better if the training of aspirant-interpreters again took place in the Netherlands. Schlegel signed his letter: "the former Chinese interpreter in Batavia now on leave, Dr. G. Schlegel."²⁵

On 23 April, Bureau Aaz sent its comments in a second, urgent *nota* to the Secretary General, summarising Hoffmann's and Schlegel's answers as follows: (1) Both Hoffmann and Schlegel were willing to teach in Leiden. (2) Both agreed that one should begin with another dialect, not with Mandarin. Hoffmann seemed to have changed his original opinion, because he now stated that the dialect of Java should come first. (3) Both recommended the Amoy dialect, which could be used everywhere except in Pontianak. However, the Bureau concluded that it could not make a decision about the dialect question of Mandarin or Amoy. If Hoffmann were to choose, he would prefer Mandarin. The Bureau stuck to its opinion of 25 March. The resolution of 1870 should be amended and Schlegel should be asked if he was prepared to train interpreters.

On 1 May, Secretary General Henny wrote to Schlegel that as a rule the interpreters should be trained in the Indies, but a special facility could be created to train a few youngsters in the Netherlands, for which Schlegel was offered a yearly allowance of f1,200. Henny asked if Schlegel would be willing to teach on these conditions. In the margin of his draft letter was written: "Schlegel has a leave with pay of f2,700 per year. If he were now given another f1,200, methinks he should be able to make ends meet."

On 6 May, Schlegel answered that he had no objections to this arrangement. And on 31 May, the new conditions were formalised by the Minister of Colonies, Fransen van de Putte. The decision of 1870 was changed: the number of students would still be 'according to need,' but was not restricted to two, and students could be assigned by both the Governor-General (in the Indies) and the Minister of Colonies (in the Netherlands). They had to take a similar competitive examination as before in Batavia, and the study period would also remain the same. In the Netherlands their

monthly stipend would be *f*50, and they would receive a gratification for equipment of *f*1,000. The study conditions in the Indies remained the same.

Nothing was said about a 'professor in Leiden,' and just as in 1870, no decision was made about the dialect to be taught. In the past, government decisions about the dialect had been wholly or partly wrong, and the Minister wisely refrained from addressing this question. For the time being, there was also no reaction to Schlegel's suggestion to compile or print dictionaries, or to teach a course in Chinese Language, Geography and Ethnology at the East Indies Institution in Leiden.

Minister Fransen van de Putte notified Governor-General J. Loudon—adding that the argument that in this way another interpreter would be withdrawn would not be valid, since there was the prospect of a position in Paris for Schlegel—and asked the King for approval. The new conditions were published in the *Nederlandsche Staatscourant* (*Netherlands Government Gazette*) of 4 June, no. 130, and Royal Approval was given on 7 June.²⁶ In this way, a new era began in Dutch sinology. And as a result, Schlegel would be the first sinologist to leave the interpreter's profession for good.²⁷

The first examination: Hoetink, De Groot, and Stuart (1873)

Even before candidates had been summoned to apply for the examination, already four youngsters who had read the new conditions sent requests for information about how to apply for this training course. They were all referred to the announcement in the *Staatscourant* of 26 June, no. 149.²⁸

On that day and two other days²⁹ it was announced that three youngsters could be assigned to be trained as Chinese interpreters for the Netherlands Indies under the guidance of G. Schlegel, Chinese interpreter now on leave in the Netherlands. Preference would be given to those who had finished the five-year HBS. Then the advantages (allowances etc.) and requirements were mentioned: the candidates should not be older than twenty, and would take a competitive examination in August. Before the end of July, candidates should send a *sealed* request to the Minister of Colonies, and produce a certificate of good character (*bewijs van goed zedelijk gedrag*), a certificate of fulfillment of military obligations or, if not yet liable to military service, a birth certificate and if available a HBS certificate. Those who would be considered for assignment would have to undergo a medical examination. Surety should be given for repayment of all stipends and other money allotted to them in case they were discharged from government service within five years after finishing their studies. Last but not least, it was announced that the interpreter's yearly salary would start at *f*300.

On 24 June, Minister Fransen van de Putte wrote to Schlegel that the

conditions had been set and that he was charged with the training of student-interpreters. The Minister asked Schlegel for information about the organisation of the examination committee and the subjects to be examined. The payment of his allowance would begin on 1 September, when the course was to start.³⁰

On 28 June, Schlegel answered the Minister and reported on the first committee in Batavia, which consisted of nine members; each subject was to be examined by three or at least two members. All subjects should be represented in the committee and there should certainly be an expert for each of the four languages (Dutch, French, German, and English) and for bookkeeping; other subjects could be combined. The student should be well versed in the four languages and be able to use a Chinese–English dictionary without the help of an English–Dutch dictionary, and should be proficient in bookkeeping. The committee members could be taken from the Higher Officials Examination committee for Part A.

At the Ministry it was observed that part A of the Higher Officials Examination had been abolished³¹ the previous year. A name-list for members of the committee was made, all of whom were teachers at the municipal HBS (*Gemeente HBS*) in The Hague, and after being asked, all were willing to take part. Two of them would later become professors at universities: Dr. Jan ten Brink (Dutch language) in Leiden and Dr. J.D. van der Waals (physics and cosmography) in Amsterdam.³² Schlegel would be chairman of the committee.

The examination was to be held in *Sociëteit de Vereniging* (Willemstraat) in The Hague from 26 August to 1 September, since Schlegel would be out of the country until 26 August. At first there were fourteen candidates, one of whom withdrew. Eleven candidates had finished the five-year HBS, but not all of them knew whether they had passed their final examination when they applied.

Just as in Batavia, all subjects were examined orally, and the four languages, arithmetic, and physics were examined in writing as well. The questions, texts to be translated and the translations are still kept in the archives.³³ As in Batavia, they comprised the writing of an essay in Dutch, and translations of Dutch texts into each of the three foreign languages. Use of dictionaries was not allowed, but the translations of certain difficult words were given. The German texts were written in a script similar to the so-called *Sütterlinschrift*.

Many years later, Groeneveldt wrote that the interpreters' examination was in some respects easier and in others more difficult than the HBS final examination; in general it was regarded as more difficult in view of the higher requirements for the languages and because it was competitive.³⁴

On 2 September, the committee concluded that the students in general had done well on the examination, and that it was not difficult to make

a choice. A ranking list was made, not only based on the total of points, but also on the relative importance of the subjects. The following three were ranked highest: 1. Bernardus Hoetink, 2. Jan Jacob Maria de Groot, 3. Hermanus Nicolaas Stuart. Three others were placed on the reserve list; the next four were also eligible, but the last three failed since they had less than twenty points for the four languages. The three best candidates had all finished the HBS. Hoetink (almost 19) was the eldest son of a baker in Deventer; De Groot (19) was the only son of a distiller of Dutch gin in Schiedam, and Stuart (18) was the youngest son of a primary school teacher in Kralingen (near Rotterdam).

The highest scores were those of De Groot (89) and Hoetink (84), but after long discussions Hoetink was ranked first because he had higher marks for the main subjects: languages, arithmetic, and bookkeeping. Similarly, Stuart, who had only 74 points, which was less than four others with 79, 77 (twice) and 75 points, was ranked third because he had higher marks for the main subjects, and in particular because of “the ease and purity with which he spoke and read the foreign languages.” The subjects to be chosen for the Dutch essay were “World Exhibitions” (*Wereldtentoonstellingen*; De Groot), “Wealth and poverty” (*Weelde en armoede*; Stuart), “Free trade and protection” (*Vrije handel en bescherming*; Hoetink), and “Ideal” (*Ideaal*), “The tragic and the comic” (*Het tragische en het komische*), “Patriotism” (*Patriotismus*). Physics and Cosmography, Dutch History and World History were now examined separately, so there were twelve subjects instead of the ten subjects in Batavia. The scores of the three best candidates were as follows:³⁵

Subject	Hoetink	De Groot	Stuart
Dutch	9	10	8
French	7	5	5
English	5	5	8
German	8	7	6
Arithmetic	9	5	5
Botany and zoology, mineralogy and geology	8	7	6
Physics	5	7	6
Cosmography	4	8	7
Geography	7	9	5
Dutch history	8	9	6
World history	6	9	4
Bookkeeping	9	8	8
total score	85	89	74
average score	7 1/12	7 5/12	6 2/12
ranking order	1	2	3

On 9 September, Minister Fransen van de Putte informed the three best candidates of his intention to assign them, asking them for a medical certificate and surety (*borgtogt*). After these were received, they were assigned to study with Schlegel; the other candidates were notified of their results and Governor-General Loudon was informed as well.³⁶ The course started on 7 October 1873.³⁷

The motivation to study Chinese

As to the motivation of the candidates to study Chinese, some light is shed by the address of the father of the candidate Th.M.G. Keulemans from Breda. His son had achieved satisfactory scores on the examination, but was not chosen because he was not one of the best (he had 70 points). But he “ardently yearned for any position in the Netherlands East Indies.”³⁸ The father requested to make him eligible for this position, or otherwise for a position at the Forestry Department in the Indies, which had a similar examination and government stipends.³⁹ The answer was a refusal: the Minister could not promise anything on either request.⁴⁰

Nothing is known about Hoetink's or Stuart's motivation, but De Groot left a diary giving a detailed account of how he came to study Chinese. It has the German title *Notizen über mein Leben* (Notes about my life), but is written in Dutch.⁴¹ During his studies and work De Groot had written several diaries, but unfortunately he destroyed all of them; the now existing diary is a condensation of their most important contents, but written in retrospect.⁴²

In the 1860s, while attending the ‘French school,’ De Groot already “wished to see the world,”⁴³ and in 1869 he took the examination for naval cadet (*adelborst*) but failed. He was allowed to attend the third grade of the HBS, and in 1870 failed again for naval cadet. This was at the time a great disappointment for him, but in retrospect it was one of the most fortunate events in his life; he realised this after he had seen how naval officers were living in the Indies.

In 1871 he was still fond of everything connected with the sea, and took the examination for officer of the marines. This time he was also rejected, but now because of myopia! His father suggested an office job might be suitable for him. This he found utterly disgusting: he did not wish to become a pencil-pusher (*pennelikker*).

In March 1872, De Groot's father rewarded his son for his diligent studies at school with a sea voyage from Rotterdam to Le Havre (France) and back on a small steamer. Although he became very seasick during a storm in the Channel, and missed a festival in April in the Netherlands, he found it worthwhile. “To wander on the high rocky coast of Le Havre

was a boon that roused the desire to see far away places more strongly than ever.”⁴⁴

After finishing the HBS in 1872, he “knew no better outlet for his urge to go into the wide world than to become an East Indies official.”⁴⁵ He registered at the Indies Institute in Delft.

However, studying in Delft was a great disappointment:

I wish to be diligent, in order to get away as fast as possible. But what kind of an outfit is this! The lectures seem to have been invented with the explicit purpose of extinguishing all idealism of the youngsters about the Indies. What an overwhelming mass of twaddle, trivia and worthless details!⁴⁶

As an example, he mentioned the lectures of Van Vleuten,⁴⁷ a temporary teacher of Geography and Ethnology:

He cancels half of his lectures by telegraph from The Hague, which he has difficulty leaving, and when he does come, he bores the audience by reading aloud from that miserable *Handbook* by De Hollander,⁴⁸ amplifying these so-called lectures with all sorts of insipid anecdotes from his own experience. Not even one attempt to get into the soul or spirit of the natives; it's all about the outside.⁴⁹

The only lectures De Groot liked and continued to attend were those of A.W.Th. Juynboll, who taught Islamic law and its influence on East Indies society.⁵⁰

He knew how to captivate his students, he could teach them something and sometimes could even make them laugh; in short, the one bright spot in that darkness.⁵¹

The moment he decided to study Chinese is well documented in his diary:

Fortunately by the end of the first year redemption came. On a fine day I read in my room above Gussenhoven's pastry shop on the Binnenwatersloot the news that aspirants were sought to study in Leiden for Chinese interpreter. To study in that university town for three or four years was most appealing to me; that was the place to learn and to study, and besides visiting the Indies I could also go to China, yes, this was probably an interesting career in an entirely different direction. Moreover, the salary was better than in the [East Indies] Interior Administration. No question of delay, the documents were sent in, and at the examination in The Hague, of the 18⁵² applicants, the highest number of points was scored by me. Jan ten Brink was one of the members of the Examination Committee.

In September there was a letter from the Minister of Colonies: that I was to put myself at the disposal of Schlegel. My Delft friends urged me to refuse this appointment as student-interpreter. According to them, being an official of the Interior Administration was much more high-class, etc. Of course, I had some doubts; but the thought that any position was honourable as long as it was held with honour, together with a desire to see a very unknown part of the world and the opportunity to cut out a remarkable life for myself prevailed. Without the slightest pain, I left the Indies Institute with its unpalatable lectures.⁵³

Schlegel's teaching methods

Schlegel's lectures started⁵⁴ on Tuesday, 7 October 1873, and his allowance of f1,200 was paid as from 1 October.⁵⁵ He was to report every three months on the behaviour, diligence, and progress of the three students,⁵⁶ but not on their financial affairs. Almost all his three-monthly reports from 1873 to 1878 can be found as *Exhibitum* in the *Verbalen* of the Ministry of Colonies.⁵⁷ From 1877–8 on, Schlegel also wrote succinct yearly reports for the University.⁵⁸ In his teaching methods, he was indebted to Hoffmann in many ways, but he was innovative in his teaching of the spoken language and his translation exercises in the documentary style. The curriculum for the first and second groups of students, beginning in 1873 (Hoetink, De Groot, Stuart) and in 1875 (Van der Spek, Moll, De Jongh) respectively, was very similar, and only differences will be pointed out here.

Like Hoffmann, Schlegel taught his students at his home. At first he lived "at the end of the Vliet,"⁵⁹ possibly his old house on Vliet 23,⁶⁰ and from March 1877 on, he officially lived at Papengracht 10.⁶¹ After his marriage in May 1878 he moved to Rapenburg 51.⁶² All these addresses are very close to the *Academie*, the main building of the University at Rapenburg 73, and to the University Library at Rapenburg 72.

He taught his students "every other day," that is, three times a week. His classes were usually on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, taking two hours each from 1 to 3 P.M.⁶³ He explained that in this way the students always had one day for memorising what had been taught. On that day off, the students were expected to study together and help each other.⁶⁴ The students were obliged to attend all lessons and had to obtain permission to skip.⁶⁵

Hoffmann had taught Chinese characters from the first day, but Schlegel had a different approach. During the first two or three months, he only taught the spoken language of the Tsiangtsiu dialect. The students used his transcription system for taking notes. This would be the most suitable method for learning a dialect such as Hokkien, which normally was not used as a written language and for which no uniform representation in characters existed.

Naturally, a lot of attention was paid to pronunciation and tones. The seven tones were learnt by heart, and Van der Spek recounted an anecdote about his fellow student Moll, referring to De Jongh's birthday party two months after they started: "We had just begun to study Chinese. Moll became drunk as a fish and walked around reciting: kun, kún, etc."⁶⁶ He was reciting the seven tones of Hokkien, which are: kun 君, kún 滾, kùn 棍, kut 骨, kùn 群, (kún 滾,) kùn 郡, kút 滑.

Schlegel's exercises in the spoken language were mostly practical, so

as to accustom the students immediately to speaking and understanding Tsiangtsiu. After three months they could already translate off-the-cuff (*voor de vuist weg*) a Dutch story that was dictated by Schlegel into Chinese colloquial.

After two or three months, Schlegel began to teach the Chinese written language as well. When teaching the literary language to the first group, he would always give explanations in the Chinese colloquial, resorting to Dutch only when they could not or not completely understand the Chinese.⁶⁷ In his reports on the second group, he no longer mentioned this method, reporting only that the colloquial and written languages were given on alternating days.⁶⁸ Perhaps he had changed his method.

After half a year, he began having the students translate simple conversations from Dutch into Chinese; these were first orally explained by him in Chinese, and at the next class the students had to bring along a written translation,⁶⁹ probably written in characters.

The main textbook during the first year was Davis' *Chinese Moral Maxims*,⁷⁰ which Schlegel had also studied with Hoffmann. This time, all characters were read in the literary style of Hokkien. In his own manuscript copy of this book with Hoffmann's translations and explanations, Schlegel added Hokkien transcriptions and a few other notes. The students made copies of Schlegel's manuscript for themselves.⁷¹ While memorising these 'sayings' (*spreuken*), they also learned the meaning and pronunciation of a few thousand Chinese characters, and became accustomed to the Chinese constructions and style.⁷²

In contrast to Hoffmann, Schlegel never mentioned teaching his students any grammar, and no title of a book about Chinese grammar appeared in his reports. He did not explain Chinese grammar in a systematic way, since in his experience, that was of no use; the only way to learn the language was by extensive reading. Such was the opinion of Prémare and nineteenth-century sinologists who had been in China for a long time. For his students, this may not have been the best didactic method, as will be seen below.

At the end of the first year, the students of the second group could translate simple (Dutch) stories with the help of a dictionary into the Chinese colloquial, without too much hesitation or too many mistakes.⁷³ This dictionary must have been Schlegel's adaptation of Doty's handbook.

In his reports, Schlegel did not mention his handbook on the Tsiangtsiu dialect. This was a Dutch translation and adaptation to Tsiangtsiu dialect of E. Doty's handbook of the Amoy dialect. He began working on it in Batavia and finished it in 1873 under the title *Hollandsch-Chineesch handboekje van het Tsiang-tsiu dialect* (Dutch-Chinese handbook of the Tsiangtsiu dialect). It was copied by all of his students in Leiden. Here

again Schlegel followed the example of Hoffmann, and the copying of this handbook became a fixed item in the training programme during the first two years. The only difference was that the students now first copied the text in romanisation and later added the characters. Several of his students' manuscript copies are still extant (*see* illustration 15).⁷⁴ One has on the first page a date one day after the beginning of the course;⁷⁵ others have on the last page a date from the end of the second year or beginning of the third year.⁷⁶

During the second year they continued to practice the spoken language, and began to translate "original Chinese books." For more than half a year, they worked on the translation of the *Sacred Edict* of the Kangxi Emperor (with the amplifications by Yongzheng), *Shengyu guangxun* 聖諭廣訓, "one of the most fluently written texts in modern (*sic*) Chinese literature, and an excellent example for future interpreters of Chinese, from whom it will be required to translate ordinances and proclamations of the Netherlands Indies government into Chinese."⁷⁷ In the nineteenth century this book was learned by heart by all Chinese who took part in the government examinations, and it was essential reading for all foreign students of Chinese as well.

At the same time, the first group translated the text of a Chinese story (*Chineesche roman*). They did this in the peculiar manner of back-translating that was used in the nineteenth century. Schlegel would dictate the Dutch translation of a Chinese story to them; this they first translated orally into the colloquial language, and then in written form into literary Chinese.⁷⁸ The story was undoubtedly "The Oil-Vendor Who Alone Possessed the Queen of Beauty," from the anthology *Jingu qiguan*, which was most popular in China and became a common textbook for foreign students.⁷⁹ Knowing the thorough method of studying Davis' sayings (memorising them), one can assume that the students first translated the story into Dutch, then back into the colloquial (spoken) and literary languages. Moreover, these texts were copied by the students, transcribed in literary Hokkien and translated into Dutch, similarly to what Hoffmann's students did with Chinese texts.⁸⁰

At the beginning of the second year, Schlegel wrote about his course in Leiden to W.F. Mayers, First Secretary at the British Legation in Peking,⁸¹ who supervised the ten student-interpreters in that legation. Mayers was impressed by the progress of Schlegel's students, and wrote:

The account you give me of your pupils in Chinese shews that they must be like yourself, very hardworking fellows. To be able to translate from the Kin-ku-ki-kwan [*Jingu qiguan*] at the end of a year's study, indicates no slight amount of progress. Here, we devote the first year exclusively to the Colloquial, and only in the second require our young men to get into the documentary style.

Sectie 3. VAN DEN MENSCH		
Mensch	人	Lāng
Man	男 人	sa po lāng
Vrouw	婦 人	sa bō lāng
Grootmensch	大 人	hū diān lāng
Klein mensch	矮 人	lò lāng
Kind	嬰 兒	é lāng
Knaap	男 孩	kiā' gā'
Meisje	女 孩	sa po kiā'
		sa bō kiā'
UITWENDIGE DEELEN.		
Ligchaam	身 體	Sin kū
Hoofd	頭 壳	tāo kāk
Haar	毛	mō
Staart	頭 鬚	tāo tsang
Voorhoofd	頭 額	tāo hiāh
Kruin	頭 壳 頂	tāo kāk tīng
Slape	鬚 旁	pīn pī
Oog	眼 睛	bāk sin
Winkbrauw	目 眉	bāk bāi
Oogleden	眼 遮 皮	bāk sin pōe
Oogkas	眼 孔	bāk k'ang
Oogbal	眼 珠 子	bāk t'ing zīn
Oor	耳 仔	hī' á'
Oorlel	耳 仔 春	hī' á' tūn
Oorholte	耳 孔	hī' k'ang
Gelaat	面	bīn
Neus.	鼻	p'ē

15. Page from Stuart's Hollandsch-Chineesch handboekje voor het Tsiang-tsiu Dialect (1877).

One wonders which story from *Jingu qiguan* the students could translate after one year. Possibly Schlegel meant “Miss Number 22,” the very short story that Hoffmann’s students had also translated.

Halfway into the second year, after finishing the *Sacred Edict*, the students studied the ‘official’ style of Netherlands Indies Government ordinances, for which they used the translations made by Schlegel himself. As an exercise, they translated Dutch documents from the *Staatsblad van Nederlandsch-Indië* (*Netherlands-Indies Bulletin of Acts and Decrees*) into Chinese.⁸² In addition, he provided original Chinese documents for translation. After finishing the *Sacred Edict*, the second group translated the regulations of the Chinese Cemetery Association in Surabaya as an example of the style used in the Indies.⁸³ In these various ways the students practiced the documentary style of the Indies.

At the end of the second year, the first group also studied the Chinese commercial style, with which they would have most to do in the Indies—probably including the account books of Chinese merchants which the interpreters had to translate and excerpt. They began to translate a new story as well;⁸⁴ probably this was the story of Du Shiniang;⁸⁵ the first group spent almost a year studying “The Oil-Vendor.”

By this time the need for a Dutch–Chinese dictionary for making written translations was being felt more and more urgently. Schlegel had been working on such a dictionary for the last sixteen years, but it was too large to be copied by hand. Schlegel now suggested to the Minister for the first time to have it printed; it could speed up the training course and would also be of use for the interpreters.⁸⁶ Probably he was thinking of the example of Hoffmann, who in 1862 had been charged by the Ministry of Colonies with the compilation of a Japanese–Dutch–English dictionary.

Some students compiled their own dictionaries. Van der Spek wrote about his fellow-student A.E. Moll in a jocular way:

He was making a dictionary in Leiden, and sometimes he would get up in the middle of the night to work on it. Once when he visited someone in Amsterdam whom he had never met before, after five minutes of talking he asked for a pen and paper to note something down concerning his dictionary.⁸⁷

During the third year the students continued to practice the spoken language, and translated parts of *Mencius* for half a year. The purpose of this was to become acquainted with the classical style, and to acquire a deeper understanding of the Chinese ideas about government and national prosperity represented by the two philosophers Confucius and Mencius.⁸⁸

During the second half of the third year, the students of the first group were mainly busy translating a few articles from a Chinese encyclopaedia, studying both the style and the subjects described.⁸⁹ This was perhaps the

Wakan Sansai Zue 和漢三才圖會, the same Sino-Japanese encyclopaedia from which Hoffmann's students had made translations; or perhaps it was from the *Guangshi lei fu* 廣事類賦 parts of which Schlegel had translated in Batavia.⁹⁰

There were some changes in Schlegel's teaching methods for the second group of students. This group was always a little slower than the first. They started learning Chinese characters after three months, one month later than the first group; they began translating the *Sacred Edict* three months later, and they started reading the first story only after finishing the *Sacred Edict*; they started later on *Mencius* and did not translate the sections from the encyclopaedia. Schlegel gave fewer details in his reports about the second group, and added only one other text: the regulations of the Chinese Cemetery Association in Surabaya. Perhaps he also refrained from using the colloquial to teach the literary language.

In 1877, Schlegel published a textbook for his course. This was the Chinese text of the story "The Oil-Vendor" with a French translation, introduction, and preface.⁹¹ Similar textbooks had been published in France and other countries. Publishing such a textbook in Dutch would of course be commercially unfeasible; it was therefore published in French by Brill's in Leiden and Maisonneuve in Paris in the hope of reaching a larger readership.⁹² It was printed at Brill's in Leiden, which had bought the Chinese type from the Government in 1875.⁹³

In Schlegel's teaching, dictionaries were certainly used, although he never mentioned them in his reports. In his inaugural lecture in 1877 he praised S. Wells Williams' new dictionary⁹⁴ as "the best and most complete Chinese-English dictionary." The students certainly used it. It gave the pronunciation of the characters not only in (Northern) Peking Mandarin, but also in (Southern) Nanking Mandarin and the dialects of Amoy, Canton, and Shanghai.⁹⁵ Van der Spek wrote in his diary an anecdote in which this dictionary figured:

Moll in love with Bertha Cors. She passed by under his window and touched by emotion he dropped his pipe. The next day the same thing happened with the large dictionary of Williams.⁹⁶

In 1892 Schlegel would state that he had successfully been teaching Chinese for twenty years without using a grammar. He also said that he had himself learned Chinese without a grammar. But he probably meant that he had not profited greatly from grammars, learning most from self-study and wide reading, just as Legge had told him in 1857.⁹⁷ In 1892, Schlegel gave the following famous advice to other sinologists young and old:

You, veterans! do not waste your precious time on the compilation of more of less complete grammars of the Chinese language. The Nestor of sinologists,

James Legge, never wrote a grammar; and you, youngsters of the vanguard! *throw your grammars in the fire! Read, read, read*—translate, translate, translate Chinese authors until you have entered into the Chinese way of ordering ideas and you think like them.⁹⁸

If the students wished to have any guide, Schlegel advised Prémare's *Notitia Linguae Sinicae*. According to him it surpassed all other Chinese grammars in past and present. As a warning against the indiscriminate use of European grammatical categories in Chinese studies, he quoted Prémare:

... after all it seems to me highly impertinent to think of adapting all the terms in use among our grammarians to the language of this people. Far preferable will it be to lay aside the artificial conceits and idle technicalities of grammar, and by various select examples lead the inexperienced student by a more rapid and less tedious course to the fundamental principles and philosophic practice of the Chinese tongue.⁹⁹

Schlegel's motto on how to learn Chinese has often been quoted by other sinologists. James Legge was the first to do so in his review of Schlegel's article in 1893:

Many of Prof. Schlegel's remarks ... are calculated to be very beneficial to all students in Chinese. But it is not likely, however, that many of them will accept his advice in full: "Jetez vos grammaires au feu. Lisez, lisez, lisez—traduisez, traduisez, traduisez des auteurs Chinois jusqu'à ce que vous soyez entrés dans l'ordre d'idées chinois, et que vous pensiez comme eux."¹⁰⁰

Actually, Schlegel himself did not completely adhere to his motto. During his studies in Leiden, Hoffmann had always stressed grammatical analysis, and Schlegel had even hand-copied Rémusat's grammar. And in his inaugural lecture in 1877, he would state that Stanislas Julien's "Grammaire Chinoise"¹⁰¹ would "for many years be an indispensable book in the hands of sinologists;" noting that this grammar emphasised syntax and was completely free from Latin and Greek grammatical ideas.¹⁰² The latter was of course the essence of his advice to "burn your grammars." In 1892 he also wrote: "My students only get a Chinese grammar in their hands when they have already mastered the Chinese language."¹⁰³ This explains why his student De Jongh owned a copy of Julien's grammar. There is also evidence of use: De Jongh inserted the many corrections from the errata list and added Hokkien transcriptions.¹⁰⁴

The following table gives an overview of the contents of Schlegel's study programme.

first year	Spoken language (Tsiangtsiu dialect)	
	Copying Schlegel's handbook of Tsiangtsiu dialect (first in romanisation only)	
	After two or three months: Chinese characters and written language	
	Copying and memorising Davis' <i>Chinese moral maxims</i>	
	Translating a dictated story and simple conversations into colloquial (orally or in transcription) and into literary Chinese (in characters)	
second year	Spoken language (Tsiangtsiu dialect)	
	Copying Schlegel's handbook of Tsiangtsiu dialect (characters)	
	original Chinese books	<i>Sacred Edict</i> Stories from <i>Jingju gigan</i> ("The Oil-Vendor", "Miss Number 22", "Du Shiniang"), from Chinese into Dutch and from Dutch into Chinese
	East Indies documentary style	Studying Schlegel's Chinese translations of Neth. Indies Government ordinances Translating from the <i>Staatsblad van Ned.-Indië</i> (<i>Bulletin of Acts and Decrees</i>) into Chinese Translating original Chinese documents into Dutch Translating Chinese commercial style from the Indies Regulations of a Chinese Cemetery Association in Surabaya
	third year	Spoken language (Tsiangtsiu dialect)
		books also read for their content Selections from <i>Mencius</i> , <i>Confucius</i> (<i>The Four Books</i>) Chinese encyclopaedia

In contrast to Hoffmann, Schlegel did not stimulate his students to take courses at the university. Most of them were not qualified for this in any case, since they had no *gymnasium* diploma. They also did not take courses in the Laws, Government, Languages, Ethnology, and Geography of the Netherlands Indies given at the Indies Institute or the university,¹⁰⁵ but while translating East Indies documents, they certainly learned something about these subjects. In his inaugural lecture of 1877, Schlegel would state that learning a language encompassed learning all other subjects. He must, therefore, have found that there was no need for his students to take other courses.

In all his reports Schlegel expressed great satisfaction with the students' behaviour, diligence, and progress. After one year he wrote about the first group: "and it is clear that they take up and practice their study with love."¹⁰⁶ And after two years, he wrote about the second group: "The youngsters continue to work on the study of Chinese with love."¹⁰⁷

In the diaries of two early students of Schlegel, De Groot and Van der Spek, one can find lively descriptions of Schlegel and his lectures, but seen from different standpoints and representing diametrically opposite opin-

ions. These show that Schlegel's satisfaction with his students was not always reciprocal.

De Groot was highly critical of Schlegel and his teaching methods. The year before he came to Leiden, De Groot had already been greatly disappointed about his studies in Delft, where his high expectations had not been met, and now he had the same experience in Leiden.

Most importantly, De Groot found the atmosphere during Schlegel's lectures disgusting. In his condensed diary some sentences expressing his dislike too vividly were later crossed out, probably by himself; these are reconstructed here and printed in italics.¹⁰⁸ He wrote in his diary:

Schlegel can hardly appeal to me. *In his lectures he always makes us swallow filthy erotic talk, doesn't feel embarrassed to teach us the most vulgar Chinese curses, under the pretext that knowledge of these is indispensable for us later as interpreters, and he is always full of dirty jokes and vulgarities about sexual life. He seems bent on draining away all respect for women in the weaker characters.*¹⁰⁹

Nor did De Groot appreciate Schlegel's teaching methods:

We have hardly anything to do for him. He doesn't teach us Chinese syntax, we have to guess at the meaning of long Chinese sentences like blind men hitting an egg. ... Why should one pin all one's hopes on learning a certain amount of words each week, and a few so-called sayings gathered by Davis which are in fact no real sayings? Why make us wriggle through a vulgar erotic story from the *Jingu qiguan*, written in the low Peking dialect, not even in proper literary Chinese?¹¹⁰

When reading his diary, one should keep in mind that it was written many years later with the benefit of hindsight.¹¹¹ For instance, at the time he was studying, De Groot certainly could not yet judge the quality and style of the Chinese texts they read.

According to De Groot, perhaps also with the benefit of hindsight, Schlegel did not at all stimulate the scholarly ambitions of his students:

Why doesn't he make us follow lectures by other professors? ... Why doesn't he ever say anything about Chinese literature, history, manners, customs, religion? We get to hear nothing, nothing at all about related subjects, such as Buddhism and Sanskrit, nothing about geography, nor about Chinese government institutions, or anything. For my two fellow students these were three years of real loafing; indeed, Schlegel's teaching system seems to be organised on purpose to cultivate loafers.¹¹²

Moreover, he wrote in his diary that they had been "kept in Leiden for three and a half years, while the basics of the language could have been taught in half a year." And he commented cynically that only Schlegel was to blame for this, because he needed students to teach in order to extend his period of leave and to obtain a professorship in Leiden!¹¹³ This was a gross exaggeration, and after De Groot became professor himself in 1891,

he had quite a different opinion. From 1893 on, he taught (written) Chinese in private tutorials to a few students for the foreign service. In 1898, when asked for advice about the training of future interpreters for the foreign service in China, he wrote that one and a half years of language training in Leiden was needed. His student at the time, G.S.D. Hamel (1877–±1954, son of P.S. Hamel, Consul General in Amoy in 1890–2), had studied written Chinese with him for one and a half years and was now advanced enough to continue his studies in China, but it would be even better if he could stay for another half year.¹¹⁴

De Groot was an inquisitive and ambitious man, with an independent mind and an obsession to unravel the system of religion—he had just broken with the Roman Catholic Church—and he would later become a great scholar and expert on Chinese religion. When he became professor himself in 1891, in his inaugural lecture he gave a more mature opinion of Schlegel, addressing him as “Professor Schlegel, esteemed teacher, under whose highly valued guidance I took my first steps in the field of scholarship.” At that time he especially valued Schlegel’s “unrivalled knowledge of China’s languages and writings.”¹¹⁵ It is not impossible that De Groot’s anger was also roused by the difficulty of Chinese for him: he would not have been very good at languages, judging from his marks on the competitive examination, and he would not be very good at speaking Chinese,¹¹⁶ although in the written language he would soon more than make up for this. In Berlin, De Groot later stated that he did not consider himself a student of Schlegel, claiming that he had learned Chinese as an autodidact.¹¹⁷ Yet De Visser, who studied with De Groot in 1902–4, in his obituary wrote that De Groot, just as Schlegel had done, too much denied the usefulness of systematic grammar for beginners. And in Berlin he was even known to “despise grammar.”¹¹⁸

His aversion to Schlegel and his lectures was not shared by all his fellow students. One of the students in the second group, J. van der Spek, had an opinion that was quite the opposite.¹¹⁹ He was much impressed by Schlegel and was more than satisfied with the atmosphere in Schlegel’s classes:

Schlegel imprinted us in Leiden largely with the ideas about religion, virtue and ethics that he had on his turn borrowed from Heine¹²⁰ and others. He had a great influence on our spiritual education.¹²¹

It would be difficult to find a more pleasant teacher for us. As I said, we learned a lot from him besides Chinese, and of the two-hour lecture, he spoke for at least half an hour about other matters and sometimes even longer. He told us hundreds of dirty stories, was the first to inform us about what was written in *Elements of Social Science*,¹²² and all of it in a very entertaining way. He told us a lot about the wickedness of people (missionaries, etc.), the stupidity of people (professors) etc. etc. Moreover a large number of interesting stories and anecdotes, jokes; he knew all scandals.¹²³

In his diary, Van der Spek noted two stories by Schlegel that came to his mind. Both are about the confrontation with a foreign culture; one is a 'dirty' story and the other is about a strange Chinese custom in Amoy.

A traveller arrives in Amoy and has dinner with an Englishman. A meat dish is served, baked in paper and therefore it looks strange. With a half frightened expression the guest tries it, and when he finishes eating, he is asked how it tasted. "Good." "Yes, this is a special dish; they get it so nice because the cook chews it first." And seeing the frightened expression of the dupe, who almost vomits, "Oh, don't you worry: I have checked that his teeth were clean."

Some time later, twenty or so Chinese come along yelling, pulling a boat towards the shore. Yet one cannot see the boat, and the foreigner asks what this means. It happens to be Chinese New Year, and he is told that the Chinese throw a rope into the water and then symbolically pull in the New Year.¹²⁴

There is another story which Schlegel probably told his students, and which he published later in his *La loi du parallélisme en style chinois*.¹²⁵ This story reminds one of a Zen master who teaches his students by confronting them with the absurd:

One day in China I wrote a Chinese reply to another Chinese letter, after which my teacher said to me: "This won't do at all. It is not profound (*shēn* 深) enough, it's too clear. I'll write you another letter for him of which he won't understand a thing." When I remarked that I just wanted my reader to understand me, he answered: "That doesn't matter; it would be better that he doesn't understand anything than that he understands all."¹²⁶

Other students also highly esteemed Schlegel, and De Jongh had the greatest respect for his scholarship. In a discussion with Van der Spek, he compared Gustaaf and his father Herman Schlegel with the greatest German scholars of the century: "The Schlegels are just as great as the Humboldts and the Grimms, and one Schlegel is just as great as Lessing!"¹²⁷ In this respect Van der Spek's appraisal was more modest: "According to me, Schlegel is not a creator, but he follows the words of others. 'What you inherited from your fathers, make it your own to possess it.'"¹²⁸

Another feature of Schlegel's teaching was the informality of his relationship with his students, in contrast to almost all nineteenth-century professors in Leiden.¹²⁹ It was not uncommon for professors to invite students to their homes for tea, but Schlegel invited them also to his wedding, where the bride was the same age as his students:

In June 1878 Schlegel married his cousin Buddingh,¹³⁰ and we had three or four agreeable tea-evenings at which he and Madame both gave speeches and last but not least there was an exquisite dinner where wine was not spared. After dinner Madame played the piano and Schlegel sang with a wonderful voice, and he treated us if possible even more as friends than usually. Fairly cheered up we returned home.¹³¹

De Groot would probably not have appreciated such informality. On the other hand, Van der Spek seems not to have liked De Groot very much, since he wrote in Batavia: "Had dinner at Groeneveldt's. Not much fun because of Jan de Groot's presence." ¹³²

The second examination: Van der Spek, Moll, and De Jongh (1875)

Schlegel had obtained a two-year sick leave in June 1872, and when he was charged with the training of interpreters on 27 September 1873, he was told to report for a new decision on his position before his period of leave would end.¹³³ On 18 April 1874 he did so, because he had not received his leave pay since February.¹³⁴ A few weeks later, on 8 May 1874, Minister of Colonies Fransen van de Putte decided that his leave was to be extended until further notice, and that Schlegel would keep his yearly leave pay of f2,700.¹³⁵

The next year, on 8 March 1875, Schlegel handed in or sent another *nota* to Secretary General Henny in a second attempt to consolidate both the future of Dutch sinology and his own position in Leiden. It basically contained two requests: to charge him with the training of a second group of student-interpreters in Leiden, and to make him titular professor in the same way as Hoffmann.¹³⁶

In the *nota*, Schlegel pleaded for the creation of a permanent opportunity for youngsters to be trained as Chinese interpreters for the Indies. Otherwise, there would be the danger that in a few years the present interpreters in the Indies would all have disappeared.

Schlegel now frankly recognised that failure to train interpreters in Batavia was one of the causes of the shortage, adding that three of them had died, and in ten years all the others would be entitled to a pension. There were only five new interpreters being trained now, for ten positions. Schlegel again mentioned the problem of finding suitable candidates in the Indies, but stated also that not all the present interpreters would be proficient enough in Chinese to teach others, just as not every student of law could immediately after graduation be made professor of law and teach others.

On the other hand, in the Netherlands there were enough candidates. In 1873, ten out of fourteen candidates achieved sufficient results, and three were appointed as student-interpreters. They were making good progress, and should be able to go to China for further study within less than two years.

Because of the need for interpreters in the Indies, it seemed urgent to continue the training of student-interpreters in the Netherlands, and to charge one of the interpreters in the Netherlands permanently with this task. Financially, this would be no problem. For example, Schlegel him-

self would be entitled to a pension starting in 1882, when he would be only 42 years old and perhaps had another thirty years to live and enjoy a pension. There would be no need to pay him the pension if he would be charged with teaching in the Netherlands.

If the Minister could agree with this opinion, Schlegel suggested giving the person concerned the title of titular professor (*hoogleeraar titulair*), just as it had been given to the Japanese interpreter Hoffmann in 1855. With such a title, the person concerned would remain under direct supervision of the Minister of Colonies, unlike an ordinary or extraordinary professor (*gewoon of buitengewoon hoogleeraar*), who would be subject to the Minister of Home Affairs (*Minister van Binnenlandsche Zaken*).

Moreover, the professor could devote all his attention to teaching, while the interpreters in the Indies also had to attend to their official duties, and the government could also save the expenditure of the salary of a Chinese teacher.

Secretary General Henny answered Schlegel on 14 April, writing that the Minister (W. *baron* van Goltstein) was not convinced of the need to charge a special professor with the training, but agreed with Schlegel that a special measure was necessary. During the summer, a competitive examination was to be held under Schlegel's guidance for two candidates.

Two months later, three announcements were published in the *Staatscourant*, the first on 9 July no. 159.¹³⁷ This announcement was identical with that of 1873 except that now only two student-interpreters would be admitted. The examination would begin in the last week of August, and the course would start on 1 October.

A committee was organised with ten members; all except two were the same as in 1873.¹³⁸ This time there were at first ten candidates. Three of them withdrew before the examination, including W.R. *baron* van Hoëvell, a nephew of the famous member of the Council of State (*Raad van State*) with the same name (see Chapter One). The reason for his withdrawal was that his father considered it more useful and desirable for him to be trained as a government official in the Indies in order to be able to support himself earlier, whereas longer studies were necessary for a Chinese interpreter.¹³⁹ The seven remaining candidates all had finished the HBS.

The examinations were held in two teams on 24–28 and 30–31 August. The original texts, the translations, and essays are still kept in the archives.¹⁴⁰ This time, the foreign languages examination was enlarged. Not only were Dutch texts to be translated into French, German, and English, but the candidates also had to write essays in French and English, and to take a French dictation. No reason was given for this intensification.

On 8 September, in its report to the Minister, the committee concluded that the examination had been done just as well as in 1873, and that there was ample choice to find two suitable candidates. A ranking list was made

on which Jacobus van der Spek ranked first, but it was difficult to choose the second candidate: A.E. Moll or A.A. de Jongh. Van der Spek had, with 90 points, the highest score ever. Moll was second with 80 points; two other candidates had 78 and 74, and De Jongh had 72, but he was better in the four languages than the two candidates above him, and better than Moll in English and bookkeeping. Since the votes of the committee members were evenly divided, the chairman, Schlegel informally decided to choose Moll, but the Minister was asked to make a final decision.

Jacobus van der Spek was the middle son of a farmer in Delft, Alexander Elisa Moll was the middle son of a shopkeeper from Zutphen but was now living in Assen, and Arie Arendt de Jongh was the eldest son of the mayor of Zuidland. All three were 18 years old.

The subjects for the Dutch essay were: “Taxes” (*Belastingen*; Van der Spek, Moll), “Political parties” (*Staatkundige partijen*; De Jongh), “North Pole expeditions” (*Noordpool expedities*) and “Epic poetry” (*Het heldendicht*). The subjects for the French essay were “Guillaume Tell” (Van der Spek, Moll) and “Les sources de la richesse publique en Hollande” (De Jongh), for the English essay: “Taste and Fashion” (Van der Spek) and “Departure of troops for war” (De Jongh; Moll’s essay is not extant). The French dictation was entitled “Les ruïnes de Herculanium et de Pompéia.”

The scores of the three best candidates were as follows:

Subject	Van der Spek	Moll	De Jongh
Dutch	7	7	7
French	7	8	6
English	7	5	7
German	4	7	7
Arithmetic	9	8	7
Botany and zoology, mineralogy and geology	9	7	7
Physics	8	4	5
Cosmography	9	5	7
Geography	6	7	4
Dutch history	8	9	5
World history	9	9	4
Bookkeeping	7	4	6
total score	90	80	72
average score	7 6/12	6 8/12	6
ranking order	1	2	3

When Secretary General Henny read in the report of the committee that Moll and De Jongh were considered equally suitable, he suggested that the Minister appoint three instead of two candidates. This was in the first

place because a third candidate could very well be used, and moreover, Groeneveldt, who just returned from his two-year stay in China, had again left for China. Secondly, if the student-interpreters were now trained in a similar way as the last time, the training would be easier and more regular than if in one or two years one single interpreter would be trained. Possibly his old friend Schlegel gave him this suggestion. In any event, the Minister followed his advice.

On 10 September 1875, the three candidates were notified that the Minister intended to appoint them as student-interpreters. Thereupon, they sent in the reports on their medical examinations and later also certificates of surety.

Minister Van Goltstein appointed them as student-interpreters on 22 September. He wrote to Governor-General J.W. van Lansberge that the need would increase accordingly as the twenty-year service periods of the present interpreters were fulfilled. Moreover, there was the consideration that the Dutch Legation in China might need to make use of Chinese interpreters from the Indies.¹⁴¹ The Governor-General was to notify the Minister when more interpreters would have to be trained.¹⁴² The course began on Saturday 2 October 1875.¹⁴³

Schlegel becomes a titular professor (1875)

Two months after Schlegel's second request for a professorship was rejected by Minister of Colonies Van Goltstein, he made another attempt. On 15 June, he sent a letter with a *nota* to P.F. Hubrecht,¹⁴⁴ Secretary General of the Ministry of Home Affairs, together with a two-page review of his latest book *Uranographie Chinoise* (1875) clipped from *De Samarangsche Courant*.¹⁴⁵ These were probably accompanied by letters from several well-known European sinologists to Schlegel showing appreciation for his writings, namely Wilhelm Schott, Stanislas Julien, d'Hervey de Saint-Denys, and Hoffmann.¹⁴⁶ The Secretary General forwarded the documents to H. Vollenhoven, *referendaris* and chief of the Department of Education, Arts and Sciences (*Departement van Onderwijs, Kunsten en Wetenschappen*).¹⁴⁷

Schlegel's *nota* was entitled "On the need of a Training College for Student-Interpreters of the Chinese language in the Netherlands."¹⁴⁸ In it, Schlegel repeated the arguments that he had used before in letters to the Ministry of Colonies, only adding a few details, but writing with even greater eloquence. He gave a short introduction of the history of the training of student-interpreters, stating that it had been expensive because of the long stays in China, and inadequate because Hoffmann did not know the Chinese dialects spoken in the Indies. After the decision to train the

students in Batavia, it developed that not enough candidates could be found; therefore Schlegel had been charged with the training in Leiden. Now he had three students, and two would follow soon, but this would only be enough to fill the vacancies caused by the deaths of three interpreters, not for vacancies due to the retirement of the others. It would be desirable to train a few students every three or four years to maintain a full corps of interpreters. Thus it seemed desirable to establish a training college (*kweekschool*) for Chinese student-interpreters under the guidance of one special professor.

A special professor was also needed for other reasons. There was a need for good dictionaries and textbooks. One could not translate East Indies ordinances and proclamations with the help of the existing English–Chinese dictionary, which was only suited for translating missionary literature.¹⁴⁹ Schlegel had been compiling a Dutch–Chinese dictionary, the manuscript of which was largely finished. The Chinese–Dutch dictionary by Francken was at the press in Batavia, but it would take several years before the printing could be finished, hence it would be desirable to edit and print it in the Netherlands.

If the government wished to be sure of having a permanent supply of good interpreters, it should arrange in time for a good training college and good teaching tools. Not every interpreter could be charged with teaching.

Schlegel then repeated the need to teach a course on the laws, customs, and religious manners of the Chinese to the students of the Indies Institute in Leiden: the officials in the Indies would almost everywhere come into contact with the Chinese, and most of the opposition and bloody revolts by the Chinese could only be blamed on the lack of knowledge of Dutch officials about the Chinese. Schlegel ended his *nota*:

Finally, if the Netherlands at one time found it necessary to appoint a professor for *Japanese*, a country with which we only have trade relations, a *chair for Chinese* may not seem superfluous, since the Netherlands has more than 200,000 Chinese subjects in its colonies, whose interests are closely intertwined with ours, because they make no small contribution to the East Indies treasury and to the development of industry and trade in the Netherlands Indies.¹⁵⁰

Vollenhoven gathered information in various ways before reporting to his superior. He asked the opinion of the KITLV, which institution sent positive appraisals of Schlegel by professors Hoffmann and Kern.¹⁵¹ He also read in the *Bijdragen tot de TLV van NI* of 1874 and 1875 that Schlegel was teaching during his leave period and received f1,200 from the Ministry of Colonies. His conclusion was that it would be strange to offer him a scholarly distinction without notifying the Ministry of Colonies. That Ministry would be in the best position to judge whether Schlegel should obtain the same distinction as Hoffmann, and to consider what else Schlegel wished.

On 10 August, Minister J. Heemskerk wrote to his colleague of Colonies that the scholarly merits of the Chinese interpreter Dr. G. Schlegel had been highly praised by experts, and that this had led to the wish to confer on him the title of professor; the same title had been given to the Japanese interpreter Hoffmann in 1855. He asked the Minister of Colonies for his advice.

In the Ministry of Colonies, Secretary General Henny wrote a short note that in view of Schlegel's merits, one could answer that there was no objection. Since another group of two students was to be trained, Schlegel, who was now on indefinite leave, might stay in the Netherlands permanently, so that his relation to the other interpreters would probably be no objection.

This time Minister of Colonies Van Goltstein changed his mind, and even wished to go further than Heemskerk, possibly in compensation for his earlier rejection. While four months earlier he had not been convinced of the need for a professor, he now answered Heemskerk on 18 August that he had no important objections, although he was not happy with the mere title of professor, and would have greatly preferred to establish a chair for the Chinese language in Leiden! Schlegel certainly deserved an appointment as titular professor.¹⁵²

On 24 August Minister Heemskerk proposed to the King, who approved by Royal Decree of 1 September 1875 no. 6

to confer on Dr. G. Schlegel, Chinese interpreter in the Netherlands Indies on indefinite leave in the Netherlands, the title of professor.¹⁵³

In the archives of Leiden University, no reference to this appointment could be found, and the Leiden Students Almanacs of 1876 and of 1877 did not mention Schlegel either,¹⁵⁴ showing that this matter was not generally known at the time.

The conditions of Schlegel's position remained the same. For the next few months, Schlegel signed his reports to the Minister of Colonies as "The professor, Chinese interpreter on leave, G. Schlegel."¹⁵⁵ But from April 1876 onwards, he simply wrote: "The professor, G. Schlegel."¹⁵⁶ After he had been made titular professor, it would still take another two years before his position in Leiden would be definitively consolidated.

Student life in Leiden

From the diaries of De Groot and Van der Spek, it becomes clear that the student-interpreters were not isolated in Leiden, and that both took an active part in student life. As a rule they were not registered as students of the university, and they could therefore not become members of the Student

Corps (a social fraternity); almost all of Leiden University's 700 students¹⁵⁷ were Corps members. However, De Groot somehow found a way to be registered at the university:

In September Prof. De Vries registered me as student of law in the *Academic Album*, because without that registration one cannot become a member of the Student Corps.¹⁵⁸

Subsequently, De Groot underwent the noviciate during which the freshmen (*groenen*) were ragged and hazed by the older Corps students. He wrote in his Diary: "I am a novice, and I'm to be initiated with the rest in October."¹⁵⁹ The Student Corps Almanac of 1874 gave the following account of the noviciate (*groentijd*) and initiation in 1873:

September arrived in the country. Gradually the Breestraat and Rapenburg were populated with swarms of timid, pale boys, running about alone or in pairs, and filled with deep awe for each bully (*barribal*) who came upon them with his long coat, stick and high boots. The noviciate was as before: the same witticisms a thousand times repeated on the one side, and the same air of holy innocence on the other. Fortunately at least once the inventive genius of some was able to check the stupid routine by the organisation of an original festivity. On the second of October, one could see the otherwise so sinister club garden converted into a jousting ground, where the novices were to compete in agility, skill and strength. For mast-climbing, sack-racing, archery, etc. prizes were put up by the zealous committee, for which the rivals contended with enthusiasm. Of course, all of this was to the greatest amusement of some bystanders. After the festivity, the novices marched in procession through the town accompanied by Grentzius' music.¹⁶⁰

De Groot did not mention in his diary a traumatic incident that happened during this festivity, leading to the death of a fellow student. At the time this incident seems not to have been very important to him, preoccupied as he was with his new friends and studies. Thirty years later he recounted it in an anonymously published pamphlet against hazing:

On the afternoon before the inauguration day, traditional games for the freshmen were organised in the club's garden, with glasses of gin as prizes. It was bleak, drizzly October weather. I was assigned to wheel S.B., of weak constitution, to pass under a balancing tub, which he had to hit with a stick to pour the water onto me. But as a result of a quick move backwards, which I gave the wheelbarrow at the critical moment, the wave of water fell on himself. Mad cheers: but nobody cared about the soaking boy. No one thought of sending him home to change clothes; he was calmly left to walk around until the end of the festivity, and kept to have dinner at a students' table. At last he arrived home late. No one ever saw him again. A few days later word was spread that he had been taken home ill and two weeks later his death notice followed.¹⁶¹

The Student Corps Almanac of 1874 continued:

A great relief for both students and novices was brought by the day of 15 October. In the afternoon one could already discern in all a certain festive mood.

... And if one had a mind to see the novices with trembling hand sign their names under the laws of the Corps, accompanied by a deafening uproar lasting for more than an hour, he could find earlier opportunity for this [than usual] in the large Municipal Auditorium. According to the convocation, the initiation was to begin at seven o'clock. Still, because of the large number of new academic citizens, the president could only start his initiation speech after half past eight. This was listened to with interest and not too many interruptions (wishing for total silence would be Utopian), as was the *assessor II*'s introduction of the various institutions and associations to our new brothers. Afterwards all walked according to tradition along the Breestraat and Rapenburg to Minerva [the fraternity house], where the festivities ended with a glowing drinking-bout.¹⁶²

As was usual for students, De Groot rented rooms with a landlord:

I rent rooms with Verhoog, the bailiff, in the Haarlemmerstraat No. [69] ... A year later I move with the same landlord to Hooigracht No. [33] ...

For the future elite of the Netherlands, the Student Corps with its hierarchy, debating clubs, sporting associations and many other societies, fostered social skills and friendships for life. De Groot benefited greatly from his membership in the Student Corps. He was intellectually stimulated by his fellow Corps members, and his interest in the science of religion was aroused:

A lot of club friends. It is mainly due to them that the desire to read and to study is kept alive in me. Prefer to read works on the science of religion and all related subjects. Dupuis' *Origine des cultes*, Strauss, Renan, Volney, etc. etc.¹⁶³

The theories of these scholars would be a great influence on De Groot's works. C.F. Dupuis (1742–1809) with his *L'origine de tous les cultes* (1795) and C.F.Ch. comte de Volnay (1757–1821) were at the time still the leading 'mythologists.' Dupuis asserted that all cults originally had the sun as their object, and Volnay found that all religious cults and ideas were based on the zodiac (for instance the twelve apostles). D.F. Strauss (1808–74) and E. Renan (1823–92) both were interested in the life of Jesus and history of early Christianity, and were 'mythologising' the traditional accounts of the life of Christ.¹⁶⁴

At the same time, De Groot's own religious life came to an end, as he recounted in his diary. While attending the HBS, his "eyes had already been opened to the tyranny of the Roman Catholic Church." In his diary he wrote that some clerics had sown discord in the family, inciting his mother against his father, who had sent his children to public schools. They thereby poisoned their family life and made his mother unhappy by making her believe that her children would go to hell. Thanks only to the steadfastness of his father, for the clerics the bomb burst in the wrong direction and all the children broke with the church. In 1874, after his elder sister broke off her engagement as a result of their machinations, De Groot cut off his

last ties with the church. He decided that henceforth he wished to have nothing to do with it.¹⁶⁵

Membership in the students' club not only gave De Groot inspiration for his studies, but also an opportunity for recreation:

I did not lose my liking for sports. I train regularly four times a week at the Students' Gymnastics Association Arena,¹⁶⁶ where I boast the name of best gymnast in the club after Isebree Moens.¹⁶⁷ During the summer, I also faithfully practice the noble art of swimming, of old my favourite pursuit at Rhijnzicht. On Sundays long walks are taken with some friends, and when there is ice, the skates practically don't leave my feet as long as there is daylight.¹⁶⁸

On 8 December 1876, a few days before he left for China, he treated his Leiden friends to a big farewell dinner at Restaurant Karg in the Paardensteeg. On Monday 11 December 1876, several friends and all his Corps friends came to Feyenoord (Rotterdam) to see him off on the train to Paris, from where he would travel to Marseille.

Van der Spek was not a member of the Student Corps, but he associated not only with his fellow student-interpreters of the first and second groups, but also with regular university students. These were students of law, theology and medicine, which were the most common subjects at the time. His best friends were J.C.J. Jonker (1857–1919) a student of law from 1876 on, who must also have studied East Indies languages,¹⁶⁹ and Abram Lind (1858–1931), who had been informally studying Chinese since 1876¹⁷⁰ and joined their classes in October 1877.¹⁷¹ Other good friends were the theology student Rienstra,¹⁷² a certain 'Poeloo,' and Van Boekeren, who was still attending the HBS and studied law starting in 1878.¹⁷³

The three student-interpreters of 1875 were also best friends. De Jongh, the son of a mayor, came from a high-class background. Through him, Van der Spek and Moll became acquainted with many other people. Moll, who came from the rural and 'backward' province of Drenthe, was even 'greener' than Van der Spek; in the beginning he often got into trouble and was made fun of by the others.

With all their friends, the student-interpreters established a literary club called *Insulinde*, which was organised similarly to other student associations. Moll was made secretary and he kept the minutes; Rienstra was president, and for a gavel they used a brush (*schuier*) picked up on one of their excursions. Van der Spek wrote about *Insulinde*:

We got together weekly on a fixed evening to play at cards; but soon we found it better and more pleasant to make it into a small literary club. For all of us, that has been very useful and pleasant. I learned to improvise, as best I can now; when or rather before writing to think it over well and express my thoughts rather well; but in particular *Insulinde* developed and stimulated

our love and knowledge of the arts. [quoting Heine:] ‘Life would be endless bleeding, if poetry did not exist. She ensures us what nature gives us: a golden time that doesn’t rust, a spring that does not fade. Cloudless luck and eternal youth.’¹⁷⁴

Throughout his diary, Van der Spek would quote German, English, and Dutch poetry, which played an important role in his thinking and emotional development.

The student-interpreters were members of *Musis Sacrum*, the sub-association of the Student Corps devoted to music, paying a *f*5 membership fee per year.¹⁷⁵ When in China, Van der Spek regretted that he had only once gone to a concert in *Zomerzorg*, a famous pub next to the railway station, because he found the entrance fee of *f*0.75 too high.

In the 1870s, there were hardly any female students at Dutch universities. The first female student in the Netherlands was Aletta Jacobs, who studied medicine at Groningen University starting in 1871. Therefore, students often courted daughters of the Leiden bourgeoisie, or chased servant girls. When Van der Spek wrote his “Leiden memories” in Amoy, the “love-stories” were the first subject he treated; apparently these had left the deepest impression on him. A few examples:

In Leiden I arrived on 1 October 1875 and I was green in many respects, also as to girls. Therefore it was not strange that I soon fell in love with *Josephine van Geenen*, a coquettish, delicate brunette whom I could see almost the whole day if I sat at my window. She knew how to dress very finely, and although she was thin, she was pretty and had an elegant appearance. I didn’t speak much with her, but my jokes were to her liking, and although it was rather superficial, it was still lively and pleasant. This continued for a few months; then there came a reaction and I could no longer stand the sight of her; later I was completely indifferent to her. On a summer evening during that last period, when there was no one at home and she was sitting at the open window, I once kissed her lustfully. De Jongh and I did it by turns, which proves that I was at the time only moved by lust.¹⁷⁶

Another love-story is about De Jongh and Betsy Hoogenboom. Van der Spek concluded this story with quotations from Goethe and other poets which helped him to analyse and describe the situation:

The second day that we were in Leiden, De Jongh took me along to see a beautiful girl, who lived in a house adjoining the *Pieterskerk* (St. Peter’s Church) at the end of the *Nieuwsteeg* (New Alley). He spoke now about her ample buttocks, then again about her heavenly eyes, and he fell more and more in love. Together with Poeloo¹⁷⁷ he composed a letter in which he wrote how much the salary of the interpreter would be, etc. He posted the letter and the next day Betsy came to see Poeloo. De Jongh—height of folly!—flew after her and tried to see her a few times. Of course, there came a rejection, and after a second letter the same. When we frequented the Van Dijk family,¹⁷⁸ the eldest daughter Stine knew the whole story, and De Jongh asked if he could

meet the girl at their house. No. Most daringly he went to ask the father, Mr. Hoogenboom, for permission to visit her at home. The next Sunday he went there, and a few days later he received a formal letter of rejection.

"Be affectionate to women, and you'll win them, on my word. / But who's rash and daring, may perhaps get on even better." (Goethe) / "Not much he kens, I ween, of woman's breast / Who thinks that wanton thing is won by sighs: / Pique her and soothe in turn, soon Passion crowns thy hopes." (Byron 129)¹⁷⁹

According to Van der Spek, quite a few love-stories could be summarised as follows: "Many Leiden students languished for a girl to whom they had never spoken."¹⁸⁰

De Jongh may not have been successful with Betsy Hoogenboom in Leiden, but he did prove his heroism in a bar in the Nes, at that time the red-light district in Amsterdam. This can be read in undated letters from Lind and Jonker to Van der Spek, received in Amoy on 9 April 1879:

Now I have to tell you something that will fill De Jongh's heart with nostalgic feelings: Café l'Amour in the Nes has burnt down; after his return to the fatherland he will never again be able to see the scene of one of his former exploits.¹⁸¹

Like De Groot, Van der Spek was also fond of sports, although he did not take part in any competitions. The foremost pastime was taking walks:

In Leiden there are many rather nice walks. Along the Witte Singel, and other winding city moats, around [the estates of] Endegeest, Poelgeest, [the villages of] Warmond, De Vink, Leiderdorp. Usually I walked around Endegeest with Moll or Lind or more friends on Sundays.¹⁸²

One of the finest excursions was to Haarlem [30 km north of Leiden] in 1877, on a beautiful Sunday in May with Lind and De Jongh. We stopped here and there in the nice villages, had a bite or drank some gin and arrived merrily in Haarlem Wood, where we saw many pretty Haarlem girls. [On the way] in Lisse we helped a maid carrying water and scrubbing the street. We went to the Evening Church to listen to the beautiful organ, but our attention was heavily distracted by a few lovely girls from the town who afterwards left the church followed by us. We grabbed a couple of housemaids and went to Leiden by train.¹⁸³

Like De Groot, Van der Spek also loved skating. He gave the following description of one such outing:

One Sunday morning at 8 o'clock, Stuart, De Jongh and I went on skates to Delft [20 km south of Leiden], although my family [in Delft] had written to me that it was too dangerous. The ice was bad, and at Leidschendam Stuart, up front, got stuck on a board hanging under a bridge, and just in front of me, De Jongh went through the ice. He grabbed a rope on which this board was hanging and was pulled up by helpers rushing forward. Stuart's position was desperate because the four ropes holding up the board were very thin. However, he calmly untied his skates, handed them to the bystanders, as well as a piece of cloth that he had put between the strap and his foot to prevent

pinching. Then he was hauled up, but the bystanders watched him with furious looks because instead of getting down on his knees to thank God, he let loose a few resounding curses. We went to a farmer and De Jongh got the ‘Sunday trousers of John the farm hand,’ etc. and changed clothes inside the cow stable. Just when he was busy putting on those trousers, the whole family of the farmer came to watch him, with right up front a sweet farm-girl of twenty. In the confusion De Jongh forgot to put on a pair of underpants, but because it was too cold that way, he put some hay on his belly. From then on we walked home, stopping off at every ‘house of salvation’ and drinking shots of brandy, and after De Jongh took the liberty to piss in a coalbox at Reijneveld we arrived half reeling in Delft.¹⁸⁴

Other sports were horse-riding, and on summer evenings rowing along the Rhine to De Vink. Like many university students, the student-interpreters had the habit of drinking lots of alcohol, and many outings ended in drinking bouts. It is not known if De Groot was such a heavy drinker as Van der Spek and his friends were, but one can imagine that De Groot was glad to destroy his diaries if they contained descriptions similar to Van der Spek’s. Van der Spek wrote that he attended not so many parties (*fui-fen*), nevertheless listing seventeen of them in his diary, one of which took place after his friend Jonker passed his prescribed first-year examination (*propjes*):

In the evening we rode to Alphen [Alphen aan den Rijn, 20 km east of Leiden] and on the other side of the water [of the river Rhine] I saw lights, large and small, and in my later speech I expressed the hope that Jonker would meet many great lights, many joys on his path of life. Rienstra as usual quarrelled with the toll-collector, but he excelled in wittiness during the evening. Before we had supper he, being the president [of Insulinde] wished to give a speech, and while he was speaking solemnly, Moll vomited over the whole table: “I am sorry, Mr. Moll, that my words make such a deep impression on you.” Somewhat later Moll again vomited a little, and the president still continued in a dignified manner, only inserting a short phrase: “as Mr. Moll just said.” Subsequently all went wild. Buns were thrown at Moll’s head continually. (He had recovered after three jugs of Selzer water.) Jonker played the piano, the Faust waltz¹⁸⁵ and now everyone became frantic, in particular Lind, Rienstra and Moll. Lind was about to fall down and accidentally was hit by Wanrooy,¹⁸⁶ causing him to fall with a thud and wound his lips. Now everybody jumped on the tables and chairs, flung the chairs through the room and finally we had a row with the public-house keeper. After Rienstra had wrecked a lampshade etc., the retreat of this ‘moribund mishmash’ began. The eight of us (Jonker, Lind, Wanrooy, Rienstra, De Jongh, Moll, De Bruin¹⁸⁷ and I) finished twenty bottles of exquisite red wine and four bottles of champagne, aside from about four bottles that we drank at Jonker’s place and in the carriage.¹⁸⁸

Although ‘student pranks’ were socially accepted to a certain degree, few people would later take pride in this kind of behaviour. Fortunately Van der Spek did not destroy his diary, and nowadays one can still obtain a lively picture of this side of nineteenth-century student life.

Probably these parties and drinking-bouts hardly interfered with their studies, although the second group progressed a little more slowly than the first. In his reports to the Ministry, Schlegel was always highly satisfied with the behaviour, diligence, and progress of his students. In Van der Spek's diary there is mention of only two parties causing drunkenness that interfered with their studies:

Anton de J. came to me in October 1876. We went to Poeloo, partied until 6 o'clock, got up at 9 o'clock, and I asked Schlegel in vain not to teach class. That was one hung-over mess!¹⁸⁹

On Lind's second birthday, Moll was systematically gotten tight, and the next day with Schlegel he had to ask for leave after he first in vain had drunk a glass of water.¹⁹⁰

When the three students left for China, Lind and Jonker organised an excellent farewell party for them.¹⁹¹

The graduation of the first group (1876)

On 10 October 1876, after three years of study, Schlegel reported to the Minister of Colonies that the students of the first group were advanced enough to continue their studies in China for one year and then be appointed in the Indies. He asked the Minister to take measures so the three could go to China before the end of the year. At the same time, the Consul in Amoy should be asked to search for a suitable house for the students, lest they would lose precious study time searching for a house in a place without hotels. But their stay in Amoy needed only to be temporary: after a few months the youngsters should settle down in Tsiangtsiu (Zhangzhou) in order to come into daily contact with Tsiangtsiu Chinese and study the dialect most spoken in the Indies.¹⁹²

From this time on, perhaps the three students stopped studying in Leiden, since all the letters they wrote were sent from their home addresses. On 11 October, Stuart, in a letter from Kralingen, announced that he had already reserved places for their voyage to China! Moreover, Schlegel did not mention these students in his three-monthly report of January 1877.¹⁹³

On 6 November, De Groot wrote from Schiedam to the Minister of Colonies that the gratification of f 1,000 was insufficient for buying the indispensable books for their further study. He asked for an advance payment of f 400 from their future salary in the Indies. When Schlegel's opinion was asked, he wrote on 12 November to the Secretary General that he had no objections as long as the students agreed. He explained that all books about China were extremely expensive, since all publishers charged heavily for printing Chinese characters to compensate for the interest on

the large capital necessary for buying a set of Chinese type. Such an advance payment had also been given to himself and Francken, and was useful:

Experience has shown that such an advance payment for buying scholarly works could be very profitable, because the study of these works would stimulate the youngsters to devote themselves to scholarship in the footsteps of the earlier scholarly men.¹⁹⁴

All three students underwent a medical examination and passed as fit for service in the Indies. Their military obligations were also fulfilled; Hoetink and De Groot had both paid for a substitute, and Stuart was exempted from military service because his two elder brothers had fulfilled their obligations (*broederdienst*).

On 20 November, the Minister proposed to the King to assign the three student-interpreters to the Governor-General, whereby they would enter the colonial service. The financial and other conditions now also included an optional advance payment of *f*400 for books and an advance payment of four months' stipend totalling *f*200. At the same time, the Governor-General, the Consul in Amoy and Schlegel were notified.¹⁹⁵ The King gave his approval by Royal Decree on 23 November 1876.¹⁹⁶ All three students wished to receive the *f*400 advance payment for books, and sent in an extra surety for this.¹⁹⁷

On Monday 11 December, Hoetink, De Groot, and Stuart left by train to Paris, where they hung around (De Groot: *rondgezwalkt*) for three days and then took the night train to Marseille. On 17 December they boarded the Messagères Maritimes ship *Amazone*; they arrived in Hong Kong on 19 January 1877.¹⁹⁸ From there, De Groot took a short trip to Macao, possibly accompanied by the others. They arrived on 2 February¹⁹⁹ in Amoy, where they were received by Consul C.J. Pasedag.

The establishment of a chair for Chinese (1877)

After many years of preparations, in 1876 finally a law on higher education was passed in Parliament.²⁰⁰ This was a natural sequel to the law on secondary education of 1863. Although universities had existed in the Netherlands for as much as 300 years and they were called *universitas* in Latin, the Dutch name *universiteit* was not yet used for them, and they were called *hoogeschool* ('high school') or *akademie*. According to some, this was because the number of subjects taught was considered too small for a university.²⁰¹ Pursuant to the law of 1876, the three existing *hoogescholen* of Leiden (1575), Groningen (1614), and Utrecht (1636) were to be expanded and reorganised as *Rijksuniversiteiten*, 'National Universi-

ties.²⁰² Thanks to this expansion, there would also be an opportunity for a chair of Chinese. The law was passed on 28 April 1876, but it only came into effect one and a half years later, on 1 October 1877.

'Higher education' comprised more than university education; it included the pre-university education at the *gymnasium*. After the law on secondary education of 1863 had come into effect and the HBS had been established, this new type of secondary school tended to supersede the old-fashioned *gymnasium* which did not yet have a standardised legally prescribed system.²⁰³ Now the law of 1876, for instance, also stipulated the subjects to be taught in the *gymnasium*, which were the same as those of the HBS with the addition of Latin and Greek (and optional Hebrew). The total curriculum lasted six years, one year more than the five-year HBS.²⁰⁴ Only those who had finished *gymnasium* were allowed to study at a university.²⁰⁵

The law of 1876 also stipulated which faculties should exist and which subjects should be taught at each university. Besides the three *hoogescholen* mentioned above that became National Universities, the Athenaeum Illustre of Amsterdam (1632), which had functioned more and more as a university, could and would be made into a Municipal University (*Gemeente Universiteit*). Other specialised universities could be established under the name of *hoogeschool*. In the old university system, Latin had been the official language of instruction and writing, but during the last decades Latin as language of instruction had in fact been mostly replaced by Dutch.²⁰⁶ From 1877 onwards, both Latin and Dutch were allowed (Art. 45); this resulted in the actual abolition of Latin as the common language of the university, with a few exceptions—for instance, the yearly programme of courses (*Series Lectionum*) was still to be published in Latin (Art. 47).

In addition to the subjects that were obligatory for all universities (Art. 42), other subjects were to be taught at at least one university (Art. 43). Three of these directly concerned the East Indies:

'Islamic law and other popular institutions and customs in the Netherlands Indies,'

'State law and institutions of the Netherlands Indies,'

'Languages, Literatures, Geography and Ethnology of the East Indies Archipelago.'

Most important was Article 44, which stipulated that chairs could be established for other subjects "if the King deemed it necessary."²⁰⁷

On 10 March 1877, Minister of Home Affairs Heemskerk asked the Trustees of Leiden University (*College van Curatoren*) which chairs would be necessary when the new law came into effect on 1 October of that year. This request was forwarded to the Senate and then to the Faculties. The Faculty of Arts sent their report to the Trustees on 19 April 1877. In the

report a number of new chairs were listed, such as for Dutch literature (as distinct from Dutch language), but also for languages and literatures of the Indies such as Javanese, Madurese, and Malay (and a lectureship for Sundanese). The Trustees accepted this proposal, but made some additions. To the original letter of the Faculty of Arts, someone added in pencil: “Moreover 1 prof. in Chinese and 3 lecturers in the modern languages.”²⁰⁸ One of the five Trustees was L.A.J.W. *baron* Sloet van de Beele, who had been Governor-General of the Indies in 1861–6; in that position he had been a staunch supporter of the Chinese interpreters including Schlegel,²⁰⁹ possibly the more so since he knew Schlegel’s father, having visited him just before going to the Indies.²¹⁰ He was probably instrumental to this addition, the more so since Sloet in August 1877 became President of the Trustees, and he was the only Trustee to whom Schlegel expressed his gratitude in his inaugural lecture in 1877. Another indication is that De Groot wrote in his diary: “[Schlegel] was waiting for a professorship, for which his friend Sloet van de Beele c.s. were working.”²¹¹

On 19 May 1877, the Trustees answered the Minister of Home Affairs

that besides the chairs for professors and lecturers recommended by the Faculties, it would seem desirable to appoint at Leiden University a professor for teaching Chinese, as a necessary condition for the training of those who will serve the Country in our East Indies possessions ...

A list of fifteen chairs for professors was added, the last four of which were those for Malay, Geography and Ethnology of the Indies, Javanese and finally Chinese.²¹²

A few months later, on 10 September, in Leiden ten new professors were appointed by Royal Decree (no. 1), including P.J. Veth (History, Geography etc. of the Indies), P.A. van der Lith (Law in the Indies), A.C. de Vreede (Javanese language and literature) and J. Pijnappel (Malay language and literature). They had been teaching at the Indies Institute in Leiden for some time and would receive a yearly salary of *f*6,000,²¹³ while the minimum salary for a professor was *f*4,000 (Art. 52).

Later that month, on 29 September 1877, Minister Heemskerk reported to the King that the Trustees of Leiden University strongly advised appointing a professor of Chinese to train students for functions abroad (probably meaning the Foreign Service) or in the Indies, pointing out that the Minister of Colonies had also urged appointing Schlegel in such a position.²¹⁴ Heemskerk noted that an appointment of this professor would involve only a slight increase in the government’s expenditures, since Schlegel now earned almost *f*4,000 (namely *f*3,900). Such an appointment was possible since other chairs could be established if the King deemed it necessary (Article 44 of the Law on Higher Education). In the margin of this draft letter was written: “urgent” (*spoed*).²¹⁵

Schlegel was appointed the next week, just after the new law had come into effect. The King approved by Royal Decree of 3 October 1877 (no. 6):

to appoint Dr. G. Schlegel as professor in the Faculty of Arts and Philosophy at the National University at Leiden to teach the Chinese language at a yearly salary of f4,000. ...²¹⁶

Later that month, on Saturday 27 October 1877 at two o'clock in the afternoon, Schlegel gave his inaugural lecture after having been sworn in at the plenary meeting of the Senate (*Senatus Amplissimus*).²¹⁷ The title of his oration was: "On the importance of the study of the Chinese language" (*Over het belang der Chineesche taalstudie*). It was a continuation and amplification of his arguments during the preceding years when he was pleading for a professorship in Chinese. He first gave a short overview of the history of Chinese language studies in Europe and in China (mostly by Europeans), then dwelled upon the state of the art in 1877, finally giving examples of both the scholarly and practical importance of sinology.

The first Westerners who studied Chinese were missionaries, motivated by the wish to convert China's millions of inhabitants to Christianity. These were Nestorians in the sixth century, Jesuits and Dominicans starting in the sixteenth century, and Protestant missionaries in the nineteenth century. Schlegel then treated the development of Chinese studies and professors of Chinese in France, Germany, Russia, Britain, and the United States, finally mentioning his contemporary professors d'Hervey de Saint-Denys (1873, Collège de France), M.-A. Kleczkowski (1871, École des langues orientales, Paris), W. Schott (1838, Berlin), J. Summers (1846–73, King's College, London) and his successor Robert K. Douglas, Dr. J. Legge (1876, Oxford), and in China Sir Thomas Wade and the American 'veteran of sinology' S. Wells Williams. Then he gave an account of the origins of Dutch sinology, beginning with Von Siebold's and Hoffmann's interest in Japan in the 1830s. He stated that it was not necessary to review what Hoffmann had done for scholarship, recounting only what he had done for Chinese teaching. Now Schlegel was also obliged to speak about himself and about the training of Chinese interpreters for the Indies. He gave a touching but also somewhat self-centered account of the beginning of his own Chinese studies:

Professor Hoffmann was one of the oldest and most intimate friends of my father and he often visited our house. The instructive conversations which I heard as a nine-year old boy, both from him and from Dr. Von Siebold, aroused my desire to learn the Chinese language, and on a certain day in November 1849, I went to Dr. Hoffmann without telling my parents and asked him to teach me Chinese. The master received the boy friendly, and my desire and the excellent instruction of the beloved teacher made me soon make such progress in the knowledge of the Chinese language that Hoffmann informed the Minister of Colonies in November 1853 ... In the beginning I

was often teased by my school friends because of my ‘Chinese,’ but I was soon followed by others, first C.F.M. de Grijs ... and later the too early deceased J.J.C. Francken ...²¹⁸

As to the importance of Chinese studies for scholarship, he mentioned early Chinese travelogues of India and what he called ‘comparative linguistics.’ At this point, Schlegel’s love of anecdotes came out, but also his penchant for fantastic theories. He recounted the story by Herodotus about King Psamméticus of Egypt, who wished to ascertain which was the most ancient language of the world. As an experiment, he ordered his shepherd to raise two children in a stable without ever speaking a word to them, in order to discover which language they would speak first. The shepherd often took his goats to the stable to feed goat’s milk to the children, and after two years he heard them utter a word for the first time: βῆκος (bèkos). When the King asked around to which language this word βῆκος belonged, his scholars found out that this was the Phrygian word for ‘bread.’ Since then, Herodotus said, the Egyptians recognised the Phrygians as more ancient than the Egyptians. Schlegel commented that this was probably originally an onomatopoeia, βῆκ (bèk), for the goats’ bleating, the only sound that the children had heard, to which the Greek ending –ος was added. The Phrygian word meant ‘pastry’ (Dutch *het gebak*). In the nineteenth century, the relationship of this word with the Indo-European languages had been established, for example in Anglo-Saxon *bacen* (to bake, to fry), Dutch *bakken*, etc., and the hypothetical original form *pak* or *bak* had been reconstructed. Schlegel now stated that the old name for ‘to bake’ in China was also *bak*. It was now pronounced *pik* in Canton and Amoy, and *bì* in Mandarin. The (rarely used) character 燔 contained the radical ‘fire’ and the phonetic *bak*, which in itself meant ‘to spread’. The verb *bak* therefore meant ‘to spread before the fire.’²¹⁹

A few years earlier, Schlegel had voiced similar theories. He recognised that Edkins was the first to try to compare Asian and Indo-European languages,²²⁰ but in his introduction to his own study on this subject he wrote that he only acquired Edkins’ book when his own study was already at the press in Batavia. Schlegel had been working on it completely on his own at the Batavian Society for Arts and Sciences. In 1872 he published his *Sini-co-Aryaca*²²¹ in which he compared Chinese with Sanskrit and other Indo-European languages. In this work, he gratefully made use of the results of Indo-European studies, adding supposed Chinese cognates based on his knowledge of modern Chinese dialects and Duan Yucai’s reconstructions.²²² He did this according to rules governing phonetic change similar to those used by European linguists. For instance, the (Mandarin) Chinese *gěi* 給 (to give) he supposed to be related to the English ‘to give,’ German ‘geben,’ etc.; Chinese *huǒ* 火 (fire), Cantonese *fô*, was related to English

'fire,' French 'feu,' Spanish 'fuego' (fire), etc.; and Chinese *niē* 捏 (to nip), Cantonese *nip*, to English 'to nip,' German 'k-neifen,' Dutch 'k-nijpen,' etc. His study contains a great number of similar fantastic examples, for each of which cognates in a great many languages are listed.²²³

In his oration, Schlegel only mentioned that in 1876 his *Sinico-Aryaca* aroused long discussions at the Orientalist Congress in St. Petersburg. "This work aroused more interest than I ever expected, and it proved that the horror of studying Chinese disappears as soon as it arouses sympathy by her relationship to our languages."²²⁴ This latter conclusion is probably the only one that is still valid today.

In the field of history, too, d'Hervy de Saint-Denys and W. Vissering's studies of Ma Duanlin's encyclopaedia had been very enlightening on the history of Japan and of finance in China,²²⁵ and the study of Chinese astronomy had shed light on the original meaning of the names of stars—this was again based on Schlegel's creative fantasy in his *Uranographie chinoise*.

Schlegel dwelled a little more on the practical importance of the study of the Chinese language. It was justified to say: "Language is the whole people" (*De taal is gansch het volk*).²²⁶ He who knew the language of a people, had at the same time learned their religion and social concepts and prejudices, as well as their character, development and tendencies. Therefore, knowledge about China was indispensable for the Netherlands, with its several hundreds of thousands of diligent Chinese subjects. Many problems, revolts, even wars could have been avoided if the government of the Indies had been informed by men who knew the Chinese. Groeneveldt and Schaalje could smother incipient revolts because they knew about Chinese grievances and could have them resolved. Thanks to Schlegel's publication on secret societies, sinophobia (*Chinophobie*) in the Indies had gradually diminished and the strong prohibition of Chinese immigration to Java had ended. Since there were interpreters in the Indies, the government could supervise the Chinese tax-farmers (*Chineesche pachters van 's Lands-middelen*), and merchants profited from proofs of fraud in cases of bankruptcy among the Chinese. Judges could now make use of trustworthy interpreters in the courts.

For lawyers and notaries also, knowledge of China was of great use, since this knowledge inspired confidence among the Chinese. Schlegel illustrated this with an anecdote dating from his stay in China. Often small children became frightened in the presence of the Western barbarian and ran away screaming, but were reassured by their parents with the words: "I kong lan e oa" (He can speak our language).²²⁷

He was himself often asked by lawyers (*advocaten*) in the Indies to associate himself with them: they expected that the mere presence of a European who could speak Chinese would greatly increase the number of Chinese

clients. Schlegel's conclusion was that for a civil servant, merchant, lawyer, or notary in the Indies, knowledge of Chinese would be most important, of course after Javanese and Malay.

As prescribed by tradition, he addressed the listeners in his concluding words. He expressed his gratitude to the Trustees of the University, since it was now his great fortune to be able to dedicate all his energy to scholarship. He did not regret the fifteen years spent in China and the Indies; those years had kept alive and stimulated his desire for study. Among those who had exerted themselves for a chair of Chinese, he thanked Trustee Sloet van de Beele, but also "a King's son (*Vorstenzoon*) of the House of Orange" who "was ready to give his mighty support everywhere in the field of scholarship," undoubtedly meaning King William III himself.

Among his colleagues at the University, Schlegel in particular thanked Professor Kern. Finally, he addressed the students, of whom very few would follow his courses as they would be busy pursuing their own studies; studying Chinese was not easy and required a lot of effort and time. Still, it was necessary for all those who loved their fatherland and were concerned for the flourishing of its overseas possessions, to acquire at least some general knowledge about the language, customs and manners of the Chinese. To his present students who would be interpreters in the Netherlands Indies, upon whose correct interpreting the fortune, freedom and even the life of Chinese subjects there would depend, Schlegel could only exclaim:

Continue on the road that you have chosen, double your efforts if necessary, and do not forget that except the material profits that the heavy and difficult study of the Chinese language will at some time provide to you, it will also open up many sources of pure, scholarly joy, and disprove the cheerless maxim of the followers of the Chinese philosopher Laozi that "knowledge is sorrow."²²⁸ You should better follow the Sage Confucius' maxim: *Dzî uî kun-tszû dzî / Bû uî siaó dzîn dzî*. "Be a scholar in the sense of the gentleman, and not in the sense of the plebs."²²⁹ If every student could master this maxim, then the universities would become what they are destined to be: not institutions where one comes only to acquire knowledge for one or another business; but institutions where the academic citizen is formed into an enlightened, knowledgeable and useful member of society (pp. 24-5).

From this day on, Schlegel was officially an ordinary professor at Leiden University. However, his salary would be a little higher than Minister Heemskerk expected. He kept his extra allowance of f1,200 per year as long as he taught Chinese to students assigned by the Ministry of Colonies; therefore his total yearly salary was now f5,200. At the same time, his function as 'Chinese interpreter in the Netherlands Indies on leave' and his leave salary must have ended, but no reference to this could be found in the archives of the Ministry of Colonies.

In the *Series Lectionum* Schlegel's teaching was, in accordance with the law (Art. 47), announced in Latin as "Linguam Sinicam docebit diebus

et horis auditoribus commodis,” (He shall teach the Chinese language on days and hours that suit the listeners).²³⁰ His subject of teaching was simply called “The Chinese language” (*De Chineesche taal*), just as M.J. de Goeje taught “The Arabic language,”²³¹ while most professors taught a certain language *and* literature. It is therefore not surprising that the *rector-magnificus*, Professor Fruin, on 17 September 1878 stated that Schlegel had been appointed as professor in “the language and literature of China” (*de taal en letteren van China*),²³² and Schlegel would later also usually write that he was professor of Chinese language and literature (*Chineesche taal en letterkunde*).

The graduation of the second group (1878)

After three years of study in Leiden, Schlegel reported to Minister of Colonies P.P. van Bosse on 16 October 1878 that Van der Spek, Moll, and De Jongh were advanced enough to be, after another year of study in China, stationed as interpreters in the Indies. He asked the Minister to allow them to leave before the end of the year, and to charge the Consul in Amoy to help them so that they could immediately continue their studies there.

In the 1850s and 1860s, Hoffmann’s students had never been medically examined, and three of them passed away soon after their appointment. This was perhaps the reason that Schlegel’s students were all examined both at the beginning and at the end of their studies in Leiden. On 2 November 1878, the three students underwent their second medical examination, which was done by Major Engelhart, the medical surgeon (*officier van gezondheid*) at the Leiden garrison. Moll and De Jongh were both found fit (*geschikt*) for service in the Indies, but Van der Spek was now rejected as unfit (*ongeschikt*) because of an “organic heart disease (hypertrophie).” When Schlegel heard this, he became furious and advised Van der Spek to ask Professor S.S. Rosenstein’s opinion.²³³ Subsequently Rosenstein passed him as fit, but refused to issue a certificate because Major Engelhart was a good friend of his. Thereupon Schlegel visited his colleague with Van der Spek and forced him to write the following certificate: “At the request of Mr. Van der Spek I hereby declare that I could not find any signs of a serious medical problem in the heart.” Van der Spek had already written a letter of protest, which he now sent to the Minister of Colonies together with both certificates. In his letter, he argued that before his appointment as student-interpreter he had been found fit by a military surgeon in Delft. He also pointed out that the service of the Chinese interpreters in the Indies would involve not the least physical effort or fatigue,²³⁴ in contrast to that of the *controleur* and other officials of the Interior Administration. Since he had never noticed anything special with respect to his heart, he

had gone to Dr. Rosenstein, who considered his heart normal and healthy. Therefore he requested a re-examination as soon as possible. This was allowed, and Van der Spek went to The Hague, where he was seen by a committee of four at the Ministry of War. The examination lasted for several hours because the instrument for checking the pulse did not work properly, but this time he passed. The new medical report still mentioned one “disease or defect,” namely “nervous heart beat,” but concluded that Van der Spek “can be considered fit for civil service in the Netherlands Indies.” The report was signed by General Major Van Hasselt, the Inspector of the Medical Service.²³⁵

All three had fulfilled their military obligations. The mayor’s son, De Jongh, had been lucky enough to draw a lot exempting him from conscription. Moll also somehow fulfilled his obligation (his documents are missing), and Van der Spek paid for a substitute. When he drew his lot making him liable for conscription in 1877, Schlegel was also helpful and gave him a letter for the Secretary General of Colonies, *jonkheer* F.E.M. van Alphen; Van der Spek’s old HBS teacher of political science J. van Gigch²³⁶ also did his best for him, but he still had to pay *f*850 for a substitute.²³⁷ All three students also sent in certificates of good character and other forms.

Minister of Colonies Van Bosse submitted a proposal to the King, and by Royal Decree of 10 December 1878 (no. 14), they entered the Colonial service under the same conditions as the first group. Since Schlegel now no longer had any official students, his yearly allowance of *f*1,200 for teaching Chinese ended on 1 December 1878.²³⁸

On 6 January 1879, the three students left by train for Paris, where they stayed for three days, visiting the sights and going to theatres. Van der Spek wrote in his diary:

Seen in the Nouvel Opéra: Faust; visited Folies Bergères and Frascati. Seen: Place de la Concorde, Tuileries from the outside, Madeleine from the outside, climbed the Notre Dame, climbed the Arc de Triomphe, drove to the Bois de Boulogne (waterfall), Buttes Chaumont (suspension-bridge), Hôtel des Invalides with Napoléon’s grave, Morgue, Place de la Bastille, Louvre, inside Panorama, outside Trocadéro, absinthe on the Boulevard des Italiens, had dinner at Tissot (Palais Royal) and Bocher (Boulevard des Italiens).²³⁹

On 10 January they took the night train to Marseille, and on 12 January went on board joining many Dutchmen on the way to the Indies. They passed by the following places, most of which they also visited: Naples, Port Said, Suez, Aden, Colombo, Galle, Singapore, and Saigon. On 21 February they arrived in Hong Kong, where they stayed for a few days. There they went to a book sale at the London Missionary House and met the German missionary and sinologist E.J. Eitel, who knew several of the earlier Dutch student-interpreters. At a Chinese bookshop they bought

some Chinese books (Kangxi dictionary and the novel *Honglou meng*)²⁴⁰ communicating in writing with the Cantonese shop owner, who wrote a final note full of praise. On 25 February they left Hong Kong on the *Douglas* together with 560 Chinese, travelled by way of Swatow (Shantou), where 300 Chinese left the ship, and arrived in Amoy on 28 February. They were met by Hoetink's old sampan man whom they immediately hired, and by Pasedag's clerk Haalcke.²⁴¹

A sudden anti-climax: a moratorium in the training course

When Groeneveldt was asked in 1876 by Director of Justice L.A.P.F. Buijn²⁴² if more students should be trained in Batavia, he had answered in the negative. The number of students was more than sufficient, because five were being trained in the Netherlands. A year later, when it turned out that Schlegel was now even training a sixth student, Groeneveldt on his own initiative informed Director of Justice Buijn. He considered it his duty to do so, since "he saw no advantage in a surfeit of interpreters," thereby intimating that at present no more students should be trained. This letter was forwarded to Governor-General Van Lansberge and then to Minister of Colonies Van Bosse. Van Lansberge proposed to Van Bosse not to enlarge the number of interpreters for the time being, but the latter did not react.²⁴³

On 17 October 1878, one day after Schlegel announced that his last three students could leave for China, he wrote another letter to Minister of Colonies Van Bosse suggesting the continuation of his training programme, but for the first time also expressing some doubt about the need of interpreters. He wondered whether the Minister wished to have more interpreters trained, since there seemed to be a difference of opinion between the Government of the Netherlands Indies and that of the mother country about the need to increase the number of interpreters. Some of his colleagues in the Indies were against any increase, but according to Schlegel they were not as impartial as one would expect, since they either had left the interpreter's service or planned to do so. Without wishing to interfere with the government's opinion, Schlegel suggested that he should complete the training of one more student. This was A. Lind from Amsterdam, who had finished the HBS and had been studying with him since 1876. During the second year, Lind had studied together with Van der Spek, Moll, and De Jongh, and after another year he would be advanced enough to study in China for another year and then be appointed as interpreter in the Indies. The financial advantage of this arrangement was that the knowledge of Chinese acquired by Lind could without any cost to the government be put to use in the Indies.²⁴⁴

A few weeks later, Minister Van Bosse replied in a different vein than had been done before. He stated that after the three new interpreters Hoetink, De Groot, and Stuart had arrived in the Indies, there were now more interpreters than the seven prescribed positions (*organieke standplaatsen*), and this disproportion would become even more serious after Van der Spek, Moll, and De Jongh had finished their studies in China. There could be no prospect for Lind as an interpreter in the Indies, and Schlegel's request was rejected.²⁴⁵ This decision was made despite comments by other officials at the Ministry that more interpreters would soon be needed, in particular in North and East Sumatra.

Notwithstanding, Schlegel continued to teach Lind Chinese. On 25 November 1878, Lind was officially registered at the university as a student of the Faculty of Arts (*letteren*).²⁴⁶ But the next year he was studying law, at least according to the students' almanac of 1880. He probably combined his Chinese studies with the more practical study of law. In 1887 he obtained a doctorate in law on a Chinese subject.²⁴⁷

Later correspondence made clear what had happened in the Indies. When Hoetink, De Groot, and Stuart finished their studies in China and came to Batavia in March 1878, Director of Justice Buijn at first did not know where to appoint them, since all seven prescribed positions were filled, and asked the opinion of Groeneveldt. The latter had left the interpreters' service in August 1877 and had become *referendaris* with the central government in Batavia; he had at the same time been appointed 'honorary advisor for Chinese affairs.'

Groeneveldt replied on 20 March 1878 that it was difficult to answer this question: he considered an enlargement of the corps unnecessary, since in most places their services were of little significance. All seven places of stationing according to the *Staatsblad* were filled, but now that the three interpreters had arrived, they should be placed somewhere. He suggested appointing them on Banka, in Cirebon, and in Makassar.²⁴⁸

Shortly afterwards, on 5 April 1878, Albrecht, who was an interpreter at Batavia but would leave the interpreters' service the next year, wrote an elaborate *nota* about the work of the Chinese interpreters. He bluntly stated that in most places their work was a sinecure, except in Batavia where there was a lot of translation work to be done. It would be sufficient if in all the Indies there were only two interpreters, both stationed in Batavia; at most two others could be placed in Semarang and Surabaya. In the Outer Possessions there was no need for a permanent appointment since they would have hardly anything to do. This *nota* was discussed several times by Director of Justice Buijn and the Council of the Indies, and finally on 3 March 1879, Governor-General J. van Lansberge sent a letter with a copy of the complete file to the Minister of Colonies in which he agreed with Albrecht's proposal. The new Minister, O. van Rees, who as

a member of the Council of the Indies had not shown much sympathy for the Chinese interpreters, thereupon also agreed with Van Lansberge and replied that the number of interpreters was too large in proportion to the need; he intended gradually to reduce their number to a maximum of four. There was no objection against assigning other work to the present interpreters and the three students now still in China “since Chinese interpreters often showed themselves to be well-educated men who could be of good service in other positions.” He asked Governor-General Van Lansberge to report if this measure was appropriate.²⁴⁹

As a result of this measure, Schlegel’s training course in Leiden underwent a moratorium which would last for almost ten years. A little more than a year after his appointment as full professor of Chinese at Leiden University, Schlegel for the time being lost his first and foremost function. He seemed not at all happy about this, which can be gathered from a so-called “mixed-pickle” in the students almanac of 1880:

Professor in Chinese

What were you for, learned professor?

De Génestet²⁵⁰

This ‘quotation’ is from a poem by the Dutch poet and protestant minister P.A. de Génestet (1829–61), one of the most popular poets during the second half of the nineteenth century.²⁵¹

But being a passionate scholar, Schlegel continued to devote himself to Chinese studies with fervour. And during the next decade he would publish his magnum opus, his Dutch–Chinese dictionary, build up the Chinese library in Leiden and still continue to teach Lind and other interested students.