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

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CHAPTER NINE

SCHLEGEL'S LATER STUDENTS (1888–1895)

This chapter describes how the moratorium was lifted ten years later and how Schlegel again began training interpreters for the Ministry of Colonies in 1888. It also analyses the reasons for De Groot's scholarly mission to China in 1886 and describes Schlegel's extraordinary students in the 1880s. The studies in China of all four groups of Schlegel's students are treated together in Chapter ten.

Schlegel's extraordinary students in the 1880s: A. Lind and S.H. Schaank

After the second group of students had left for China, Schlegel still taught and guided several extraordinary students. The first of these was Abram Lind (1858–1931), who had been informally studying with Schlegel since 1876. In November 1878, two weeks after Schlegel's request to have Lind trained to become an interpreter had been refused, Lind registered as a student in the Faculty of Arts of Leiden University.¹ In February 1879, he also became a member of the Student Corps. He mentioned this in a letter to Van der Spek in China, in which he wrote about a visit to the Schlegels. This letter shows that his opinion about and relation with Schlegel was similar to that of Van der Spek:

A few days ago I spent an extremely pleasant evening with your ex-teacher. ... As usual he came up with a lot of eccentric assertions, including of course quite a bit of nonsense. You all know his way of reasoning: always entertaining, but logical?! Triumphant, Madame and I (*bonni soit qui mal y pense*) challenged one of his materialist assertions and we finally drove him into the corner. Finally, in particular because we were looking at French picture albums and having a good glass of wine, it became half past eleven before I thought of taking leave, it was so damned pleasant over there.²

He continued studying Chinese with Schlegel for seven years, but during this year (1879) he took a practical step and began to study law as well.³

From 1877–8 onwards, Schlegel reported yearly to the Leiden University Trustees about his teaching. Like all other professors, he filled out a form about the courses given by him. This information was later published in the yearly reports on national education.⁴ In 1878–9 he taught one student (Lind) for six hours per week: "Chinese belles-lettres; Chinese customs, traditions and social institutions; and exercises in the Chinese spoken language (Tsiangtsiu dialect)." In 1879–84, he taught only four hours per week. In 1879–81, he taught one student (Lind)

“Modern Chinese style; exercises in the spoken language.” The following two years, in 1881–3, there were two students, who were during the first year taught “Chinese belles-lettres and moral sayings” and during the second not only “Chinese spoken language, Chinese sayings,” but also for the first time a legal subject: “Chinese law and case law.” In 1883–4 there was only one student (Lind), who was taught “Chinese Penal Law; belles-lettres, spoken language.” In 1884–5, there were four students, who were taught “Chinese language and literature” for eight hours per week. The subjects were “Chinese spoken language (Tsiang-tsiu dialect); explanation of the Sacred Edict (Modern Chinese); old and new Chinese sayings.” He also taught one subject that was of special interest to Lind: “Comparative exegesis of the Chinese Penal Code and the Western Penal Codes.” These classes were taught in Dutch, and the students were given an opportunity to ask questions, as always in his classes.⁵ The following two years he only taught one student (Lind) four hours per week; the subjects were “Chinese Penal Law and civil institutions” and “The Chinese Penal Code.”⁶

After finishing his law studies, Lind wrote a dissertation in which he combined his knowledge of Chinese with his studies of law, and he was awarded his doctorate in law on 30 November 1887. His dissertation supervisor was a professor of penal law, H. van der Hoeven,⁷ but in his preface Lind in the first place thanked Schlegel, his “highly respected teacher of the Chinese language ... whom I found ever ready to lend me his valuable aid with his extensive knowledge of that language.” Actually, Schlegel’s contribution was not confined to linguistic matters. This is evident in Lind’s open-minded and positive appraisal of Chinese law in general.

The title of his thesis was *A Chapter of the Chinese Penal Code*. The dissertation consisted of introductory chapters and a translation of the chapter about markets in the *Qing Code*, and also contained the Chinese text.⁸ In the preface he wrote:

Having for some years devoted myself to the study of the Chinese language, I wished to imitate the example set by Dr. W. Vissering;⁹ and accordingly, selected for my academical dissertation a subject treating of Chinese institutions.¹⁰

Lind explained in his introductory chapters that studying Chinese institutions was particularly important for colonial powers such as the Netherlands and Britain. As an example, he mentioned that lack of knowledge about the Chinese had prevented a peaceful solution in Borneo in the 1850s, as his friend J.J.M. de Groot had shown in his book about the *kongsi* system on Borneo (1885, *see below*).

In another respect Lind was also following Vissering’s example, since he wrote his thesis in English. Starting in the 1860s, most dissertations in Leiden were written in Dutch instead of Latin, and the use of Dutch next

to Latin had been officially sanctioned in the new law on higher education of 1876. However, Vissering had in February 1877 requested the Trustees of Leiden University to allow him to write his dissertation in English. The reason was that he considered it necessary to add the original Chinese texts, and Brill's printing costs for this could only be a paying venture if the dissertation were in English. His request was immediately approved.¹¹ Ten years later, when Lind wrote his dissertation, he probably did not need to submit such a request; in any case none could be found in the archives of the Trustees of Leiden University.

In preparing his dissertation, Lind first made "assiduous preliminary studies through the whole Chinese Penal Code" (Preface). For this he used the recent edition of the *Qing Code* of 1879 which his old friend Van der Spek had given him, probably after his return to the Netherlands in April 1885.¹² Earlier, Schlegel and other Dutch sinologists had sometimes based their advice to the East Indies government regarding Chinese law on the *Zhouli* 周禮 (Ritual of the Zhou dynasty),¹³ but Lind (like others) was not at all convinced that this body of regulations had ever been in use in practice (pp. 5, 6).

Lind considered it one of the most striking features of the *Qing Code* that it was "eminently practical." It contained

clear, brief practical enactments, yea, I dare say, that in this respect it may safely be compared with the Roman legislation, whose claim for glory is greatly due to its being highly practical. (p. 13)

By retaining the articles of law (*li* 律) dating from the Yongzheng period (1723–36) and earlier as the basic law, the *Qing Code* also showed its conservatism. This was another great principle of Roman law, although in China it was also due to inertia. By comparing his own edition of 1879 with another one in the Leiden University Library dating from 1843, he could see that a "slow but steady process of development is going on" because the later edition added "examples" or "cases" (*li* 例).

Another characteristic of Chinese law was that the whole system originated from patriarchal institutions:

The great moral principle of HAO [*xiao*] 孝, perhaps best to be translated by "respect for the family" pervades the whole constitution of the Chinese empire. (p. 15)

Although Lind stated that his translation also showed that the *Qing Code* was extremely casuistic, he considered it still on a level with modern Western ideas about justice:

they attend to the principles of principal and accessory, to *dolus* and *culpa*, to *concurus* of crimes, to extenuation of punishments on account of age, and youth, etc. etc. (p. 16)

Lind was, as could be expected, mostly interested in civil law, family law, contracts, etc., and although “much material can be found in the *Qing Code*,” civil law was for the greater part customary law. Therefore, “A doctrine of contracts, laws on bankruptcy are totally unknown.” The Chinese did have a notion of contract, but had no written laws of contract. Lind thought the reason why the “so practical and so highly cultivated” Chinese had no written law of contract was very simple. The Romans developed their system of contracts so eminently because of their contacts with other nations, while the Chinese could always satisfy all their needs within their immense empire, and needed no intercourse with other nations. A second reason was the Chinese conservatism as to institutions, and the mutual aid and assistance through the institution of the guilds, which substituted for the Western contracts and bankruptcy laws. This mutual responsibility provided the necessary surety in trade.

Lind pointed out the possible risk in applying European law to the Chinese. In the 1860s, when European institutions and laws were transplanted among the Chinese in Hong Kong, there occurred “a manifest decay in Chinese commercial morality” resulting in “general passion for speculation and overtrading.”¹⁴ Lind finally asked “the modest question” whether the constant bankruptcies among the Chinese in the Indies could be traced to similar causes.¹⁵

Lind selected the chapter on markets for his translation, hoping to find “important regulations concerning Chinese trade” (p. 26), but he was somewhat disappointed in this expectation. Clearly Lind tried to find material on which European lawyers and interpreters of Chinese in the Indies could base their advice, and which could be used for legislation in the Indies. In this respect he did not succeed, but it seems that as a result of his dissertation, the *Qing Code* now became a part of Schlegel’s curriculum.

As usual, Lind’s dissertation included a list of propositions, in total twenty, three of them concerning the Chinese in the Indies. Two of these agreed remarkably with Schlegel’s opinions: no. 1 “Codification of Chinese civil law for the Chinese in the Indies is urgently necessary,” and no. 3 “Not correct is the opinion that for a better administration of justice it would be desirable to forbid the Chinese in the Indies to keep their books in Chinese.”

Lind was one of the pioneers in the study of Chinese law.¹⁶ Unfortunately, he seems not to have continued his Chinese studies, and he did not publish anything else. After earning his doctorate he worked as a lawyer (*advocaat en procureur*) in Amsterdam. The study of Chinese law, which had started with De Grijns in the 1860s, would later be continued by other Dutch sinologists in the Indies such as J.W. Young and B.A.J. van Wetum, and still later by the better-known M.H. van der Valk, M.J. Meijer, and A.F.P. Hulsewé.

In 1884–5 Schlegel taught another extraordinary student, Simon Hartwich Schaank (1861–1935), a regular East Indies official who had first studied at the Indies Institute in Delft in 1880–2. After passing the Higher Officials Examination in 1882, on 1 November of the same year he was stationed on the East Coast of Sumatra, where there was a large Chinese population that had recently immigrated from China. This motivated Schaank to learn Chinese. He must have met the interpreter Hoetink, who was then stationed in Medan. Seven months later he was appointed Aspirant Controller (*adspirant-controleur*), but another two months later he requested two years' sick leave in Europe, which he obtained on 3 September 1883.¹⁷ According to Schaank's obituary, this was actually because the government had recognised his exceptional talents for learning languages,¹⁸ with the implication that this was a special leave for study. Schaank settled down in Delft and studied with Schlegel for two years.¹⁹ He registered as a student in the Faculty of Arts on 16 November 1884.²⁰ Regarding this course, Schlegel would later state that Schaank "assiduously followed my classes during his period of leave."²¹ As mentioned above, Schlegel reported in 1885 that he taught four students, doubtless including both Lind and Schaank; but in his report on 1885–6, Schlegel only mentioned one student whom he taught Chinese law (Lind).²² In March 1885 Schaank was probably the author of a newspaper article about the Chinese troubles in Deli urgently pleading for better treatment and higher wages for the coolies.²³ Later that year, in August 1885, he finished in Groningen a scholarly article about the Chinese in Deli, who were mostly Hakka and Hoklo, which seems to be a much enlarged and revised version of the former article, but without the plea for higher wages.²⁴ After his return to the Indies, he continued to work as an East Indies official in the Outer Possessions in Borneo. But he would keep on corresponding with Schlegel, and in the 1890s he would publish several important sinological works (*see below*).

During the 1880s, Schlegel also taught Chinese to other extraordinary students; in 1888 he wrote to Minister of Colonies Sprenger van Eijk that besides his normal course, there was also a separate Chinese course "intended for ordinary enthusiasts,"²⁵ but he did not mention the number or names of students.

The expansion of the Chinese library in Leiden University

After the establishment of a chair for Chinese in 1877, Leiden University still lacked a good Chinese library. At that time the university only had some forty Chinese books. Some of these had come from the estates of seventeenth-century scholars such as Scaliger, Vulcanius, and Vossius and

had long since been in the library, but they were more objects of curiosity than of serious study. Moreover, these books were often incomplete parts of larger works.²⁶

Until then, only the professor had had a decent Chinese library; Hoffmann already had a large collection of about 100 Chinese books, and Schlegel had a large collection.²⁷ Schlegel once wrote a few lines about the atmosphere in his library. He described how attractive his library had been to Li Fengbao 李鳳苞, the first Chinese minister to the Netherlands (1881–4), when he visited Leiden on 18 February 1881.²⁸

In those days, nothing interested the former minister Li Fengbao more and made a greater impression on him than my Chinese library and the works on China that I wrote, so much so that instead of visiting the other Museums in Leiden, he lingered on in my study to talk with me about my books, and to exult in my having lit Chinese incense sticks before the small wooden statue of Confucius on my mantelpiece.²⁹

Besides, there was of course Von Siebold's collection of Japanese books in the Leiden Ethnographical Museum, which also included books in Chinese. It was only after the Leiden University Library had obtained both Hoffmann's Chinese books and two other collections (including Von Siebold's), that a sizeable Chinese library of more than 220 titles was established, of which Schlegel published a catalogue in 1883.

Within a month after Hoffmann passed away in January 1878, Schlegel wrote to the Trustees of Leiden University:

The estate of Dr. J.J. Hoffmann, Professor in the Japanese language who recently passed away, comprises a very valuable library, both of original Chinese and Japanese works, and of European works about the languages and the countries in which the speakers of those languages live. It would be highly deplorable, methinks, if this library which has been collected with so much trouble, time and financial sacrifice, would be scattered by public sale and become lost for our country.

In the library of Leiden University there are no or almost no Chinese and Japanese works, as a result of which those wishing to study these languages, or wish to know something about China and Japan, are obliged to either purchase such obviously very expensive works, or do without them.³⁰

After a special request had been made to the Minister of Home Affairs, this was immediately approved. Serrurier and Schlegel were asked to compile catalogues of the Japanese and Chinese books, and the whole collection was purchased for *f* 5,000.³¹ It included roughly 100 Chinese books, 200 Japanese books and 200 Western books about China and Japan. A few weeks later, Schlegel made a list of the Chinese books, and Western books about China,³² and Serrurier one of the Japanese books and Western books about Japan.³³

Two years later, there came another opportunity for obtaining a valuable

collection of Chinese books. On 15 September 1880, W. Vissering wrote to the Minister of Colonies, Van Goltstein, that Brill's bookshop had received from a diplomat in Peking a collection of Chinese books that they planned to auction. Vissering had been asked to prepare a catalogue³⁴ and he reported that it was an extremely beautiful and rare collection of large standard works, each comprising numerous volumes representing all fields of science and scholarship. He stated that in the Leiden University Library until now there had existed no opportunity to seriously study any Chinese subject. He had experienced this himself in writing his thesis, for which he, with great difficulty and with diplomatic help, had collected materials from Paris, Oxford, and St. Petersburg, which usually could only be borrowed for a short time.³⁵ He did not mention that for him personally, one of the books in this collection, the *Wenxian tongkao* 文獻通考 which had been the subject of his doctoral thesis, must have been a very welcome addition. Since Chinese was in the first place taught to train interpreters for the Indies, and it was important that their studies should be as fruitful as possible, Vissering urged Minister of Colonies Van Goltstein to purchase the entire collection. The price of f4,000 which Brill asked was reasonable, if one compared it with what foreign libraries had paid for the same or similar books. If needed, a specialist could inspect the books at Brill's bookshop in Leiden.³⁶

Because the matter was urgent and Schlegel was probably not in Leiden at the time, Minister Van Goltstein asked Professor Kern for his opinion.³⁷ Kern replied with a long letter concluding that the purchase of these books, which were comparable to European manuscripts, would highly further Chinese studies in the Netherlands.³⁸

Then Van Goltstein wrote to the Minister of Home Affairs, Mr. Jhr. W. Six, that the Ministry of Colonies was prepared to pay half of the costs.³⁹ Minister Six agreed to pay the other half.⁴⁰ When Six notified the Trustees of Leiden University that the collection would be purchased, he asked for some information on the importance of these books from Schlegel.⁴¹ A few months later, the Director of the University Library, Dr. W.N. du Rieu, reported Schlegel's and Vissering's opinions to the Trustees, who informed the Minister. The whole collection comprised 50 titles, 2,610 volumes in 200 "original Chinese covers." There were dictionaries, encyclopaedias, books on history and geography, law and government, philosophy and literature, Manchu texts, works on epigraphy and numismatics, on agriculture and sericulture. Some of these books were not even extant in the library of the British Museum. Du Rieu's conclusion regarding the present Chinese library in Leiden was: "According to our Sinologists it has been promoted to one of the foremost Chinese libraries."⁴²

In November 1880, when L. Serrurier became acting director of the Ethnographical Museum in Leiden,⁴³ he suggested to Du Rieu to transfer the majority of Japanese and Chinese books of the Von Siebold collection from

the Ethnographical Museum to the University Library.⁴⁴ This collection included about 500 works described in Hoffmann's catalogue of 1845,⁴⁵ but also later additions and some 40 Chinese books from the Royal Cabinet of Rarities which had been incorporated in the Von Siebold Collection in 1860. Du Rieu wrote to the Trustees that it would be more appropriate to keep these books in the University Library since there was now a large collection of Japanese and Chinese books after the recent purchase of Chinese books; moreover, other Asian books on copper plates, palm leaves etc. were also kept in the library.⁴⁶ After approval was given by Minister Six,⁴⁷ in the spring of 1881 these books were brought to the library. About 500 Japanese books (including maps and many books in Chinese) and 40 Chinese books were transferred. About 200 Japanese items remained in the Museum, since they could be better consulted there. In the yearbook of the university, it was written that these books were now together in a section "China and Japan," in a collection that should be considered unique.⁴⁸ The Chinese collection comprised about 220 works, while there were about 700 Japanese items. Perhaps these books were already in the so-called Chinese Room, in which many years later Professor Duyvendak sometimes taught his classes.⁴⁹

Owing to the large number of books, searching them became troublesome, and Du Rieu asked Schlegel and Serrurier to compile catalogues for the Chinese and Japanese books respectively. Schlegel then wrote his *Catalogue des livres chinois qui se trouvent dans la bibliothèque de l'université de Leide* (Leiden: Brill, 1883), counting 234 items. These included some Western and Japanese dictionaries, old Sino-Western manuscripts and books in Manchu, so the number of Chinese books was about 220. The books were arranged according to Wylie's traditional Chinese categories. The catalogue is not much more than a simple list of numbered titles in Chinese characters with French transcription in Mandarin⁵⁰ and some references to Wylie's catalogue.⁵¹ It was presented at the Sixth Congress of Orientalists in Leiden on 14 September 1883.⁵² Serrurier's much more elaborate and detailed catalogue of Japanese books would appear in 1896.⁵³

An important addition came just two years later, when J.J.M. de Groot sold for f 1,200 to the library 49 books and manuscripts that he had bought in China.⁵⁴ Schlegel then compiled a supplement to his catalogue, which appeared in 1886.⁵⁵

Some important later additions were the books that must have been bought at auctions of the libraries of French sinologists, for example those of Maurice Jarnetel (1856–89), d'Hervey de Saint Denys (1822–92), and Anatole Billequin (1837–94). Via Brill the library bought an edition of the twenty-four dynastic histories in 1893,⁵⁶ and via De Groot's student W.J. Oudendijk, who was acting secretary-interpreter at the Netherlands Legation in Peking starting in 1894, a large collection of ministerial regulations⁵⁷ and imperial laws⁵⁸ in 1896.

J. T. Cremer and the dialect in the Outer Possessions

In 1879, Minister of Colonies O. van Rees had decided to gradually diminish the number of interpreters for Chinese to four. As a result, Schlegel's regular course in Leiden was discontinued for the time being. But five years later the need of interpreters was again felt urgently, now in Parliament, in a written question to the Minister of Colonies by J. T. Cremer about the dialect to be studied for use in the Outer Possessions. The next year, he repeated the question, and also mentioned De Groot's book on the Chinese kongsi system in Borneo as evidence of the urgent need of qualified interpreters in the Outer Possessions.

J. T. Cremer had worked in the Indies for fifteen years (1868–83), from 1870 on at the Deli Company, of which he became General Administrator in 1871. This company had been established in 1869 by J. Nienhuis as the first cultivation company in the Indies, developing tobacco plantations in Northern Sumatra; the labour force mostly consisted of Chinese workers from Guangdong. In 1883 Cremer returned to the Netherlands, and in 1884 he became a member of Parliament.⁵⁹

At the end of 1884, Cremer raised the dialect question in the Provisional Report in one of the sections of Parliament preparing the 1885 budget for the Netherlands Indies. He first stated that the Dutch interpreters for Chinese received practical training only in Amoy, the region from which most Chinese merchants in the Netherlands Indies originated. In the 1870s all interpreters had been trained in Amoy only, and J. T. Cremer must have known one of them, Hoetink, who in November 1879 had been appointed as the first European interpreter for Chinese in Medan (Deli). Cremer asked if it would not be advisable to have one or more interpreters trained in Guangdong (Kwang-Tung) province, since recently there had been large-scale immigration of workers and field labourers from that province.⁶⁰ Minister of Colonies Sprenger van Eijk answered in his Memorandum of Reply that the matter would be investigated; moreover he added that now a request had been made by one interpreter to study in China for two or three years. Perhaps this was an opportunity to have this interpreter (J. J. M. de Groot) study "the dialect of Guangdong."⁶¹

De Groot's scholarly mission to China

In April 1883 De Groot had returned to the Netherlands on sick leave after five years of service in the Indies.⁶² He already planned to leave the interpreter corps for good and to pursue a career in scholarship. On 18 November 1884 he requested the Minister of Colonies to send him for two or three years to China to study Chinese social institutions and customs.

His argument was that the Chinese interpreters in the Indies could but very inadequately fulfill the most important part of their duties, that is to inform the Government about Chinese affairs, since—as in his own case—they could only study in China for one year, during which they needed all their time for language studies. In his opinion, there was so much uncertainty about Chinese social institutions and customs that the Government still could not regulate the civil position of the Chinese by law, despite the urgent need for such a legal basis. He would himself be qualified for this project, since he had studied and published about this subject for twelve years. Financially, he would be satisfied if his salary of f400 were continued, to which should be added the usual remuneration for travel in the Indies.

De Groot's request was accompanied by an elaborate *nota*.⁶³ In it, he argued that since the return of the Indies to Dutch sovereignty in 1815, the Netherlands Indies Government had striven to enlarge its knowledge about its subject peoples as much as possible, and had always adhered to the motto 'Knowledge is power' (*Kennis is macht*), not only supporting scientific associations and expeditions, but also appointing well-salaried officials for language studies. The Chinese interpreters had been given too little time in China to pursue anything but language studies. In the Indies they also could not obtain information about Chinese customs, since all Chinese in the Indies were of lower-class background and were unaware of the meaning of their own customs and customary law. Dutch sinologists had been actively studying various subjects, and De Groot recalled what had until then been published by his fellow interpreters in the Indies on Chinese studies, which were either language studies or works based on the study of books and texts. Now if Chinese customs, institutions and laws had been clearly and completely codified or described, it would not be necessary to study them in China. But unfortunately, there was hardly anything in writing. Only the *Qing Code* gave the overall basic principles of criminal and civil law, but with so few details that it usually was of no great help. Moreover, an all-encompassing civil code for such a large country would be impossible, because the population of 300–400 million people was composed of very different races and tribes (*rassen en stammen*) with the most varied morals, ideas and customs. None of these had yet been described, while local customary law was just as powerful as the *adat* (customary law) in the Indies, or even more powerful. It would be most suitable to send one of the interpreters, who were the only ones who could advise the Government on Chinese affairs, to China to do research on these subjects. This would be the only way to end the uncertainty on the part of the Indies government, and also the situation of lawlessness in which the Chinese were now living. De Groot explained his method and purpose as follows:

By becoming a civilian with the civilian, a priest with the priest, a farmer with the farmer, he expects to be able to collect information that will enable the said government to get to know better and therefore to suppress more easily the secret societies that are so dangerous for its authority, about which Dr. Schlegel has cleared up much but far from all.⁶⁴

Clearly, De Groot planned to do his research using the ethnological method of 'participant observation,' as it was later commonly called. He added that he was himself the most suitable person for this research, since he had done the same direct observation for his publications about Chinese festivals in Amoy and Buddhist rituals for the dead; and he also wished to study the religious system of the Chinese.⁶⁵

After having answered Parliament that the dialect question would be studied, Minister Sprenger van Eijk let De Groot know that chances of success with the Governor-General would be larger if he would at the same time propose to use his time in China to learn other dialects,⁶⁶ which would be Hakka and Hoklo, so that he could train others in these dialects. Therefore on 18 December De Groot wrote a second letter to the Minister. He first explained that there were two main 'tribes' (*stammen*) from Guangdong in the Indies, which should be clearly distinguished. These were the Hakkas, mostly originating from Kia Ying Chow (Meixian), and the Hoklos from Teochiu (Chaochow). According to him, the Hakkas had arrived later in Guangdong from Northern China, and their dialect differed from the other Southern dialects perhaps even as much as Northern and Southern European languages. Hoklo was closely related to the language of Amoy and Tsiangsiu. The Outer Possessions were almost exclusively populated by these two groups. In the mining districts of Western Borneo the Hakkas predominated, while in Pontianak the Hoklos were in the majority. On the East Coast of Sumatra their numbers were equally divided. For De Groot it would take not more than one year to learn Hoklo, since he had already studied the Amoy dialect. Learning Hakka would normally take more time, but because he had already studied it on Borneo for three years and he could conduct a normal conversation in Hakka, a stay of ten months in Kia Ying Chow would be enough to master the language. Finally, he wrote, the corps of interpreters should probably in the end be split into two sections because of the extensive immigration of these two groups. There should be special interpreters trained for Amoy and Hoklo on the one hand and for Hakka on the other.⁶⁷ Schlegel was also consulted by the Minister, and he made known by word of mouth that he strongly supported De Groot's request.⁶⁸

Minister of Colonies Sprenger van Eijk notified Governor-General O. van Rees of De Groot's request, referring to the fruitless efforts at codification of Chinese civil law in the Indies, and the question raised in

Parliament as to whether it would be advisable to train interpreters for the dialect of Guangdong, besides those for the Fujian dialect.⁶⁹

Before answering, Governor-General Van Rees consulted Groeneveldt, who was now honorary advisor for Chinese Affairs, and L.A.P.F. Buijn,⁷⁰ the Director of Justice, who was the superior of all interpreters, and finally the Council of the Indies.

Groeneveldt wrote in his advice that De Groot was

a man of extraordinary competence and a great liking for scholarship who has shown in his important work *The Yearly Festivals and Customs of the Amoy Chinese* that he highly possesses the gift of observation necessary for thorough ethnological studies.⁷¹

If De Groot would be allowed to stay in Fujian for two or three years, he would certainly come up with important materials for further knowledge of the Chinese who contributed most to emigration to the Netherlands Indies. It would certainly be more profitable to send him to China than to keep him as an interpreter in the Indies, where there were already more than enough interpreters.

But Groeneveldt had objections to the two subjects for further research mentioned by De Groot. He advised against waiting for De Groot's investigation of customary law in China before regulating the social position of the Chinese in the Indies. Although it was highly urgent to better regulate the legal position of the Chinese, there was no need for more information. Since Groeneveldt himself and Albrecht had been studying Chinese personal and inheritance law, and he wished to make a draft text for the law himself, one should not wait for De Groot's return for a new attempt at improvement. The previous efforts at revision (from 1865 to 1877) had failed because of two other reasons. In the first place, they were not in keeping with the actual situation and tried to change certain defects in that situation, giving the legislator the unjustified role of social reformer. Secondly, it had not been sufficiently noted that certain defects in customary law in China, such as the weak position of women, could be compensated by the discretionary powers of Chinese judges, who possessed 'paternal authority.' (This would be impossible in the Indies, where judges had to abide closely to the law.) Groeneveldt suggested that his draft text be considered by legal experts later that year. There was no need to wait for the results of De Groot's investigation, but the study of Chinese law in all its details and other subjects, such as secret societies, would be of direct practical use. According to Groeneveldt, Schlegel had only studied the external features of the latter, and not the essence and purpose of these societies, since he based himself on hypothesis and not on observation; the result was often contrary to experience. It was not certain if De Groot could unveil the mystery of the secret societies, but if anyone could, he was most suitable to do so.

In the second place, there was no need to charge De Groot to study the dialects of Northern Guangdong (Hakka and Hoklo), for which he would need another two years in China, in Groeneveldt's view. There were still a large number of interpreters, and for the time being no new candidates should be trained in other dialects. But when later need arose, the same system that had been used before could best be followed. In this, the students were well taught the basics of the language by a European teacher, and obtained practical knowledge in China. "In the past this path was followed and it did not lead to unfavourable results." If one reverted to this method, De Groot should not need to pursue further studies, regardless of whether students later learned Hokkien, Hakka, or both. Groeneveldt continued:

It seems to me that other dialects than these two are not necessary in the Indies, since Hoklo is so similar to Hokkien that anyone knowing the latter can soon manage in the former. I know this from personal experience. Because I have never learned more than a few hundred deviating words in Hoklo; inserting these in normal Hokkien, it has never been difficult for me to speak with Hoklos, to understand them and be understood by them.⁷²

It would not be advisable to split the corps of interpreters into two groups for Guangdong and Fujian dialects.

Those who had learned Hakka would have to stay in the Outer Possessions all their lives and would only have a choice between Pontianak, Banka and Deli, while for the others the more desirable positions in the large main towns would be accessible. It would be better if every interpreter would learn both dialects, because they are just as useful in different places; I have done this myself and I can state that there are no great objections, since they are two dialects, and not, as De Groot states, languages with a difference as between Northern and Southern Europe—because the majority of the words are the same, with larger or smaller but always regular differences in form, and for the rest there are only the other differences that can be found elsewhere between dialects of the same language; when one knows one of them, one learns the other soon.⁷³

The statement in the report of Parliament that the study of the dialects of Guangdong province had been neglected was incorrect. Hakka, the only dialect from Guangdong that would be suitable, had been studied by Schaalje, Meeter, the late Buddingh, and the late De Breuk, and by himself, while some others had studied it in the Indies.

If the opportunity presents itself, it could be useful to begin in China with this dialect, because the desire to be stationed in the larger towns would be incentive enough to study Hokkien, which could begin in China and could be continued here to a sufficient level.⁷⁴

According to Groeneveldt, this was ample proof that further study of Hakka or Hoklo would not be necessary for De Groot. He advised to send De Groot to China to study the ethnology of Southern Fujian, and not to study Hakka or Hoklo.⁷⁵

On the other hand, Director of Justice Buijn, the direct chief of the interpreters, wrote that if De Groot was the right person for this mission, it would be advisable to send him to China for three years to study the Hakka and Hoklo dialects, in order to train others. Buijn could not agree with making this scholarly mission subservient to the explicit purpose of studying the social, economic and religious life of the Chinese. He considered all De Groot's arguments incorrect: knowledge about the Chinese was not insufficient in the Indies; the government had only to take into account the customs and traditions of the Chinese in the Indies, not those in China; the Chinese were already subject to Dutch law in many respects, and their customs were respected as long as they did not conflict with Dutch ideas of righteousness and fairness, so there was no situation of lawlessness for the Chinese.

Not uncertainty about Chinese customs, but the advice of Schlegel had been the main impediment to implementation of the regulation of the committee for revising personal law for the Chinese in 1865. Schlegel had advised to devise the new personal and inheritance law for the Chinese on the basis of the regulations in China, and was against using the Dutch system of civil registration (*burgerlijke stand*) for the Chinese.

But Buijn mainly worried that De Groot would discover that somewhere in China women did not have personal rights, and that a father could bequeath all his possessions to one favourite son, ignoring the daughters, since this could and would be a reason for the Netherlands Indies legislator to recognise rules that were contrary to time-honoured Dutch legal concepts. Buijn disagreed with De Groot's (alleged) statement "that the interpreters should in the first place be advisors to the government about Chinese law."⁷⁶

There would be no objection, it would even be praiseworthy and advisable to give a scholar an opportunity to study China and the Chinese, but it would be wrong to rivet (*vast te klinken*) such a scholarly purpose to government plans for reforms in society and legislation. If De Groot had only requested this part, Buijn would have advised against it. But it would be recommendable to charge him to study the Guangdong dialects (Hakka and Hoklo) so that he could train interpreters in those dialects. Those dialects were spoken by an increasing number of immigrants, and knowledge of these languages was in particular important since they were spoken by the most unruly (*woeligste*) Chinese, who also seldom knew the local native languages. Buijn wished to charge De Groot with a three-year mission to learn these dialects. He felt there was no reason to *charge* De Groot with studying the social, economic, and religious life of the Chinese in China. It could be left fully to De Groot's own initiative to study these purely scholarly subjects.⁷⁷

The Council of the Indies was not convinced of the need of a mission to China and expected it to be of little importance for a revision of laws for

the Chinese. According to the Council, De Groot's opinion that there was no general law in China and only local customary law, was exaggerated, but it would not be right to impose the customary law of one group on the other; it would be better to impose Dutch law. This mission was also not necessary for the training of interpreters in Hakka or Hoklo, but the Council agreed with a two-year mission to enlarge De Groot's knowledge of the languages, geography and ethnology (*taal-, land- en volkenkunde*) of China. He should only be given an extra remuneration of f200 per month for travel costs, and not the usual allowance for travel in the Indies.⁷⁸

Der Kinderen was a member of the Council of the Indies and supported these conclusions, but he did not agree with all the contents of their advice. He agreed with Groeneveldt and Buijn as to the legislation for the Chinese in the Indies, expanding on his own efforts for a better regulation of the legal position of the Chinese. And he also agreed with Buijn that De Groot should enlarge his knowledge of the languages, customs and traditions of *Guangdong* because of the large number of immigrants.⁷⁹

On the basis of these opinions, O. van Rees answered the Minister that all officials concerned recognised the importance of De Groot's mission to China, but they thought it should be completely detached from the codification of Chinese law and from learning the Hakka dialect. Van Rees proposed to give De Groot the general assignment of enlarging his knowledge of Chinese language, geography and ethnology. His extra allowance should be f200 per month.⁸⁰

Subsequently, Minister Sprenger van Eijk wrote to De Groot that the Governor-General agreed to allow him, after his return to the Indies, to go to China for two or three years to make a special study of the language, institutions and customs of that part of China from which most Chinese in the Indies originated (Fujian), with an extra fixed allowance of f200 per month.⁸¹ Although in this way both of De Groot's own main arguments for this mission had been rejected—they were probably in the first place meant to obtain government support—De Groot was more than happy with the result. He wrote in his diary that the Minister had notified him

that the Government in the Indies shall decide favourably on my request of 10 November, but wishes that the purpose of my mission to China shall be the enlargement of [knowledge about] the language, geography and ethnology in China in general. They give me more than I asked for, which suits me perfectly.⁸²

Splitting the corps of interpreters?

At the end of 1885, Cremer as a member of Parliament again raised questions about Chinese affairs in the Provisional Report for the Netherlands

Indies budget, now the budget for 1886.⁸³ These were subsequently answered by Minister Sprenger van Eijk in his Memorandum of Reply.⁸⁴

Cremer remarked that it seemed the Chinese interpreters were not always sufficiently consulted. The riots on Borneo after the abolishment of the Lanfang kongsi (1884) could have been prevented if the government had at the time sought to get sufficient information about Chinese customs before taking measures. This remark was evidently inspired by De Groot's recent book *Het kongsiwezen van Borneo* (1885), which had been written because of these riots and had pointed out serious mistakes in earlier Dutch policy towards the Chinese in Borneo.

To this, Minister Sprenger van Eijk replied, very bureaucratically, that in 1875, when it became clear that as a result of financial problems of the Lanfang kongsi, the government might have to take over its administration, the Chinese interpreter (Roelofs) had been asked for advice. And when the kongsi was dissolved after Liu Asin, the last captain of Lanfang kongsi, passed away in October 1884, the local government also had had a Chinese interpreter at its disposal (A.E. Moll).

Since the mission of one of the Chinese interpreters (De Groot) to China had now been approved, Cremer raised the question whether an allowance of *f* 200 per month would be enough, since the expenses for assistants and travels would be considerable. The Minister answered that to his knowledge there was no reason to suppose it was not enough.

Finally, Cremer remarked that according to his information, this mission was not intended for studying the dialects of Guangdong. He now asked if the investigation of the need to train interpreters in Guangdong that had been promised last year, had been effected and what the results were.

The Minister replied that this question had been studied in the Indies, and that the answer was in the negative: the experts had advised not to train separate interpreters for various dialects. Moreover, it was not necessary because the interpreters could at the same time master several dialects.

The Minister's written answers did not satisfy Cremer, and at the 26th meeting of Parliament on 13 November 1885, as the last speaker he amplified his ideas.⁸⁵ Cremer first explained that there were two 'main kinds' (*hoofdsoorten*) of Chinese in the Indies: the Fujianese (Hokkians), mainly on Java, mostly quiet merchants, and Chinese from Guangdong province, the Hakkas and Hoklos,⁸⁶ mainly in the Outer Possessions, the West Coast of Borneo and East Coast of Sumatra, etc. However, Cremer stated that the Dutch interpreters had exclusively been trained for the dialect spoken on Java, while there was no training for the dialect of the Outer Possessions—Cremer must have been thinking of Hoetink—which was very different from that of Java. The difference was not like that between the dialects spoken by a person from The Hague and by a farmer from Zee-

land or Drenthe, but rather one from Friesland;⁸⁷ it would be incomprehensible. The interpreters trained for Fujian would not at all understand the Chinese from Guangdong. It seemed particularly necessary that there should be good interpreters in the Outer Possessions, as there were many new immigrants and it was important and valuable for the government to know what was going on among them in order to maintain peace and order.

For those who had read De Groot's book on the kongsi system in Western Borneo,⁸⁸ Cremer said, it was evident that it would be most important to be well informed in the Outer Possessions. Cremer also knew this from his own experience. From this book it had become clear that excellent officials and military officers who had written their memoirs about the war in Borneo (1850–4) had completely wrong ideas about the Chinese. And how one good advice about contacts with the Chinese could have saved millions of money and hundreds of lives.

Now the Minister had stated in his answer that the interpreters could very well learn these dialects, but Cremer could not believe this, even if it only concerned a superficial understanding of the spoken language. Moreover, their service should go further than conducting a normal conversation, even further than assisting in judicial investigation and interrogation: the interpreters were in the first place advisors, as the Indies government had declared several times. After their language studies the interpreters should also pursue many far-reaching studies (*vele en ingrijpende studies*). Cremer could not believe they could learn all this so easily.

Cremer believed Groeneveldt's advice against splitting the corps had been influenced by the existing rule or custom of appointing the interpreters first in the Outer Possessions and later promoting them to the large towns on Java. But since the interpreters should be trained to converse with Chinese speaking different dialects, almost different languages, who in the Dutch possessions did not mix, it seemed to him that the government should regulate things for the interpreters in the same way as for the officials of the Interior Administration, who were destined either to serve in the Outer Possessions or on Java.⁸⁹

With immigration increasing, the Outer Possessions would offer enough opportunities for transfer and promotion; therefore Cremer suggested that if interpreters were to be trained, in particular for the Outer Possessions, this should take place in Guangdong province.⁹⁰ He thought things could not be arranged properly if interpreters were to serve both on Java and in the Outer Possessions.

Later that day, Minister Sprenger van Eijk answered that Cremer's speech caused him great difficulties, since he did not know Chinese. He could not judge the differences between the Chinese dialects. He supposed that Cremer, who probably also did not understand Chinese, based him-

self on expert opinions contrary to those mentioned by the Minister. But Cremer's final words afforded a ray of hope. There would probably be no strong objections against splitting up the interpreter corps. The position of interpreter in the Outer Possessions was very important, the Minister agreed, and Cremer's proposal would certainly be realised if feasible.

Indeed, two months later, on 8 January 1886, Minister Sprenger van Eijk wrote to Governor-General Van Rees, that Cremer had raised in Parliament the question of the training and formation of Chinese interpreters. He stated that, based on the letters from Groeneveldt and others, Cremer's remarks on the study of the various dialects and the method of training need not be considered, but that there were reasons for splitting up the corps of interpreters.⁹¹ Although the idea of splitting, first suggested by De Groot, had been rejected by Groeneveldt, the Minister now still valued it.

Governor-General Van Rees answered that on account of the Minister's memorandum (*depêche*) of 19 April 1879⁹²—at the time Van Rees was himself Minister of Colonies, so it was his own memorandum—the Netherlands Indies Government strove to cut back the corps, intending to reduce the number of interpreters to four. This was why the training of interpreters had stopped for quite some time, while some interpreters had been transferred to other positions. Under these circumstances, the Council of the Indies advised against splitting up the corps. Van Rees agreed with their advice and suggested the Minister should abandon that idea.⁹³ That was what the Minister did, but he also made a complete turnabout in policy.

A new training course

Minister Sprenger van Eijk replied to Governor-General Van Rees that he disagreed with the Ministerial decision of 1879 on reduction of the number of interpreters, because in some circumstances it would be regretted if there were only four reliable European interpreters. The interpreters not only did excellent work in the Orphans and Estate Chambers, but such reliable officials should continuously be present in regions with a large Chinese population, in particular in Deli and Western Borneo. The Minister could not take very seriously his predecessor's statement of 1879 that the interpreters rendered but few services. And if there was not enough work in the linguistic field, being talented men with diligence and perseverance, they could be charged with other functions at the Residency's offices. For these reasons, it should be decided soon to train interpreters again, who should study the various dialects spoken in the Netherlands Indies. The Minister was now expecting a proposal from the Governor-General.⁹⁴

When Van Rees received this letter, he first consulted Director of Justice

Buijn and the Council of the Indies. Buijn proposed that it would suffice to train two interpreters, and only in the Hakka dialect. The Council of the Indies disagreed with Buijn on both points. The Council found the number of two insufficient: “three would not be too many.” This was because of the need in the Orphans and Estate Chambers, and in the Outer Possessions such as Banka and in particular the East Coast of Sumatra, where tobacco culture was being extended. As to the dialect to be taught, the Council followed Groeneveldt’s opinion. The Council found it necessary to start training now.⁹⁵ On the basis of these points, Van Rees replied to the Minister that training in Leiden was again necessary. He suggested that three interpreters be trained.⁹⁶

At the time, there was an economic crisis and the Ministry of Colonies was also cutting expenses. Bureau A of the Ministry remarked that for budgetary reasons the training could not begin in 1887.⁹⁷ Moreover, Schlegel should first be asked if he was willing to teach. In May 1887, nine months after Governor-General Van Rees’ letter, Minister Sprenger van Eijk asked Schlegel if he was prepared to teach three youngsters at the usual *f* 1,200 per year.⁹⁸ Schlegel replied within three days that he would receive this charge with the greatest pleasure.⁹⁹ However, it was still to take more than a year before he could start teaching.

*The third examination:
Ezerman, Borel, Goteling Vinnis, and Van Wettum (1888)*

In January 1888, Minister Sprenger van Eijk wrote to Schlegel that the budget now allowed for the training of three youngsters, asking if it should begin in October together with the Academic year. He added that Schlegel would probably be made chairman of the examination committee.¹⁰⁰

Again Schlegel answered within a few days. He suggested arranging the competitive examination as soon as possible, since several young men had already presented themselves for the examination. The time of beginning of the course was no objection, as this course was kept completely separate from the course for simple enthusiasts (*eenvoudige liefhebbers*). He also immediately produced a list of members of the examination committee.¹⁰¹

The announcement was published in the *Staatscourant* of 21 January 1888 (no. 18), stating that the students would be taught by Dr. G. Schlegel, “professor of Chinese language and literature” at Leiden University. They should apply before 15 February.¹⁰²

This time there were 43 applicants, not counting the few who were immediately rejected because they were over twenty years old.¹⁰³ Some of the 43 candidates had passed the Higher Officials Examination; at the time there was a surplus of East Indies officials, and many who had passed

that examination were not appointed because of cuts in government expenses.¹⁰⁴ Of the 43 candidates, ten withdrew before the examination. In all, 33 candidates took part, of whom seven quit before finishing. The examination was held from 14 to 28 March and from 5 to 11 April 1888.

From now on, only nine subjects were examined instead of twelve; no subjects were split up, and arithmetic and bookkeeping were combined into one subject. All subjects were examined orally, but the four languages, Dutch history, arithmetic, and bookkeeping were examined in written form as well.

In its report of 14 April 1888, the committee stated that to its regret, the quality of the candidates was much lower than in 1873 and 1875. In those years it was not difficult to choose three highly educated youngsters out of 14 and 7 candidates; this year they could hardly find three out of the 33 candidates. There were only 16 candidates who were attending the HBS, of whom only seven had satisfactory results (20 points or more for the four languages). There were only nine candidates with an average score of 5 or more. According to the committee, these low scores should be blamed on the rashness of the candidates, who were completely unprepared. Those who attended the HBS should have known better, but in the first place the schools and examination committees were responsible for this.¹⁰⁵ The committee proposed in the future to require an examination fee of *f*25, to be returned only to those who achieved an average score of 5 or higher. In this way the high costs of such examinations could be reduced considerably, and the large number of unprepared candidates would be restricted.

A ranking list was made, based on a combination of the scores and the general knowledge of candidates, similarly to previous examinations. Unfortunately the complete score lists and examination papers are missing in the archives; the committee's report only contains a list of total and average scores of the nine best candidates. For comparison with the earlier examination results with 12 subjects instead of 9, the total scores should be multiplied by 12/9 to yield a 'corrected total.'

rank	Name	total	average	'corrected total'
1	J.L.J.F. Ezerman	66	7 3/9	88
2	H.J.F. Borel	58	6 4/9	77.33
3	E.R. Goteling Vinnis	61	6 7/9	81.33
4	B.A.J. van Wettum	59	6 5/9	78.66
5	J.B. van der Houven van Oort	55	6 1/9	73.33
6	A. Jochim	48	5 3/9	64
7	B.Th.W. van Hasselt	46	5 1/9	61.33
8	J. van Gastel	45	5	60
9	G. Huygens	45	5	60

The committee recommended the first three candidates for appointment as student-interpreter. Although Van Wettum's total score was one point higher than Borel's, the committee considered that he should be ranked lower, since he had an unsatisfactory (4) result for French and this could not be compensated by his higher scores in other subjects. Borel was ranked higher than Goteling Vinnis, whose total score was 3 points more, because of Borel's higher intellectual level (*meerdere verstandelijke ontwikkeling*). In case one or more of the candidates would not pass the medical examination, the committee recommended nos. 4 and 5.

Borel would later write that he was surprised to see the teachers of his former school, the HBS in The Hague, as members of the committee. He had been expelled from that school in 1883 because of disrespect for a new teacher.¹⁰⁶ He thought that he obtained this high ranking because of his wide reading (*belezenheid*), which had in particular impressed Professor J. ten Brink.¹⁰⁷

Johannes Lodewijk Juliaan Franciscus Ezerman (18) was the son of a shopkeeper who ran a grocery and delicatessen in Dordrecht. Henri Jean François Borel (18) was also born in Dordrecht; he was the son of a field officer (artillery) in the Dutch Army who had fought in the Achinese War on Sumatra (Atjeh War) in the 1870s and would in 1891 become Governor of the Dutch Royal Military Academy (KMA); in 1888 the family was living in Roermond. Eduard Reinier Goteling Vinnis (20) was the son of a Lieutenant Colonel of Infantry in the Royal Netherlands Indies Army (KNIL), who had passed away, and he was now living in Haarlem.¹⁰⁸ Bertus Anton Jacobus van Wettum (17) was born in Stompwijk near Leiden; he was a son of a mathematics teacher and school principal who had passed away in 1882, and he was now living in The Hague.

Nothing is known about the motivations of Ezerman, Goteling Vinnis, and Van Wettum. Perhaps Goteling Vinnis was one of those who had earlier asked to be allowed to study Chinese, since he had been studying law in Leiden since 1887. In any case, a fully paid training course and an assured, well-paid position in the Indies was attractive for intelligent youngsters of little means, in particular in those years of crisis. The wish to see the wide world and to have an interesting career could also have been a motivation, as it had been for De Groot. Borel, who was then living in Roermond, was motivated by an instantaneous impulse; he wrote later that he took part in the examination

because I wished to be in The Hague for a few days, for no other reason! I did not have the slightest hope of passing, and I did not even think of it.¹⁰⁹

When all had passed the medical test, Minister Sprenger van Eijk decided to appoint four student-interpreters instead of three. No reason for this can be found in the archives or in the letter to Governor-General Van

Rees, but on the draft letter a note was written in pencil: "It seems not necessary to explain the number of four, since the Governor-General suggested training three, but the Council of the Indies wrote 'at least three'." The reason was probably that the report of the committee was ambiguous as to the ranking of nos. 2 to 4 in a similar way as in 1875, when also one extra candidate had been accepted. Moreover, Sprenger van Eijk was convinced of the urgent need of interpreters. Be this as it may, it would later become clear that this was a wise decision.

Schlegel was also informed that four candidates had been appointed and that the course was to begin on 16 June.¹¹⁰

Schlegel disciplining his students and Borel's attitude

Schlegel's third course started on Saturday 16 June 1888, but unfortunately, Schlegel no longer wrote the three-monthly reports to the Minister of Colonies that he had been obliged to submit in the 1870s. There are only the short yearly reports to the University, which will be treated below. He only sent two reports to the Ministry of Colonies, showing that disciplining the students was a problem. Apparently Schlegel did not have the friendly relation with his students that he had had in Van der Spek's time. He was now about fifty years old, while his students were thirty years younger than he, and a generation gap between them had appeared. But the main reason was perhaps the presence of the quick-tempered and boisterous Borel.¹¹¹

After three years of study, when the third group should have been ready to be sent to China, Schlegel wrote his first report to the Minister of Colonies A.E. *baron* Mackay. He announced that the students would need a fourth year of study in Leiden and would only be ready next summer. This was because of their lack of study discipline during the first year:

The reason that the training of these youngsters takes longer than that of previous students is that, except Van Wettum, they worked badly during their first year and seemed not to realise that they should work *very hard* in order to finish their studies in three years.

The lack of rigid school discipline that is typical of our present *gymnasium* and HBS, has had a very harmful influence on the character of our present-day youngsters. They are not being treated and taught as 'schoolboys' by these institutions, but as 'little university students,' and they are no longer accustomed to their studies and their work being checked as meticulously as by the teachers of the old regime.

As a consequence, it took me almost a year to inculcate in them the rigid discipline which I deem necessary for the training course, fortunately with the result that they have been diligent since then. ...¹¹²

A year later, Schlegel mentioned another reason for their lagging behind, namely that some students were often not living in Leiden and could not

work together daily with the others as he required. And indeed, Goteling Vinnis had lived most of the time in Zoeterwoude, a village near Leiden, while Borel often lived in The Hague, and Van Wettum also lived there for almost a year.¹¹³ Only Ezerman was constantly living in Leiden. Those who lived elsewhere probably came to Leiden only three times a week to attend classes.

A third reason for their slowness was that in 1888 Schlegel had not been officially charged with the supervision of the students' moral behaviour. Therefore, when the next (fourth) group was about to begin their studies in 1892, Schlegel wrote the following letter to Minister of Colonies W.K. *baron van Dedem*:

It would be advisable, on account of my experience with the previous three students, that the new students should be strictly obliged by your Excellency to take up residence in Leiden during the whole course, since it is necessary that the youngsters study together as much as possible and this would not be feasible if each of them lives in another town and they only come to Leiden on the days of their classes. And it would moreover be advisable if I were officially charged with supervision of their moral behaviour etc., just as in the past (...1873). It seems advisable to me that the said youngsters should be notified of this charge by Your Excellency.¹¹⁴

For the first time in the history of the Chinese course in Leiden, one of the students quit before finishing. On 14 March 1890, after one year and nine months of study, Goteling Vinnis requested to be honourably discharged, but without giving any reason. Three months later his request was approved after he had paid *f*1,025; this was the total amount of the allowances that he had received from 16 June 1888 until the end of February 1890.¹¹⁵ Two years later, the retired interpreter Meeter, who was mostly living in Leiden in 1888–94, would state that he had given the students a negative picture of their future career in the Indies, and that as a consequence one of them (Goteling Vinnis) gave up.¹¹⁶ But there may have been other reasons as well. Possibly Goteling Vinnis, who was an artist, could not cope with the pressure of the Chinese course in addition to his law studies.¹¹⁷ He may actually have been discharged after cutting the obligatory classes.

The main sources of information about the course are Borel's diaries, letters, and other works. Borel kept very extensive diaries, which are now in the Letterkundig Museum (Museum of Literature) in The Hague.¹¹⁸ Unfortunately, there are no diaries from the first two years of study, and Borel also sometimes stopped writing for several months. Most entries are about his main interests: music, art, literature, friends, girls, and feelings. He did not write much about disciplinary problems or his Chinese studies. Borel's correspondence with Frederik van Eeden also gives little information about his studies.¹¹⁹

After Goteling Vinnis left, discipline was tight and the atmosphere in classes was tense, as can be seen from a letter from Borel to Van Eeden in April 1890, in which he apologised for having missed an appointment:

I would have come myself, but I *must* go to class. The relations are so very tense, that I will be discharged if I'm absent even once.¹²⁰

Studying Chinese was mainly a question of working hard. Many years later in retrospect, he simply referred to his studies as: "I went first to Leiden to grind on Chinese."¹²¹ But as an activity for diverting his attention, his Chinese studies sometimes also gave Borel a haven of rest from his volatile emotions. In that respect it was also an exercise in self-discipline. For instance, he wrote to Van Eeden on 18 March 1890, when he did not succeed in writing literature because his emotions had become too intense:

Then nothing rests of those beautiful feelings! And then I get serious doubts about myself, and find myself so awful and unfortunate because of my incompetence to create beauty. At such moments, I sit down to do Chinese, and then I think: "take care! boy, that you get there! All those thoughts are wrong and don't help you any further. But this 兒女念媽媽 [*ernü nian mama*],¹²² all those impossible scribbles and scrabbles, that's what matters for you."¹²³

Still, Borel did not work as hard as he should have. During the last year of his studies, when he was reviewing a text that they had studied earlier, and which originally belonged to the curriculum of the second year, he admitted this:

This afternoon from 1-3 I've been reviewing Chinese in the Library, the *Sacred Edict*, which we did at the beginning of last year [January 1890], and in March and April [1891], and then I didn't do much.¹²⁴

In April 1891 he wrote in his diary that he was moving to Leiden, and he urged himself to work hard on his Chinese studies, but he had other ambitions as well:

I'm moving to Leiden on the first of May and I'll put my room in order again. All my books will be restored in their honour. I'll take a fine piano. I *must* study Chinese very hard, there is *no other way*. I *have to* work. After my hours of studying I'll have ample time to write and to read. I have to finish my play that can be put on stage next season (September) and I'll have to finish "Little May"¹²⁵ in order to publish it later.¹²⁶

Borel usually did not spend many hours on his Chinese studies, but when he did, he worked very intensely, and sometimes it was even too heavy. Schlegel required his students to study together, and Borel mentioned several times that he studied together with Van Wettum, whom he called by his Chinese name "Putam."¹²⁷ Studying Chinese gave him a lot of pleasure. In August 1891 he wrote:

Yesterday I worked too much on Chinese. Today from 1-3¹²⁸ and from 7-8 with Putam. Now tonight I may once put away all that. This sounds very tame and sweet in this diary, but it isn't. Because every little Chinese character is a step closer to Happiness.

I have put everything Chinese on the shelves. Away from my table. I do not wish to see it any more.¹²⁹

In March 1892, he gave a poetic description of his reveries during Schlegel's class from 1 to 3 P.M., showing that his Chinese studies did not have his undivided attention:

Thursday, 3 March [1892] 2:30 in the afternoon.

The professor's voice. Putam's voice. Ezerman's voice. Dry and hard. Wintery. Fossilised sounds of Chinese,¹³⁰ older than Sanskrit.

Outside grey weather, naked branches behind the windows. The clock beats half past two.

And I'm dreaming of my epic poem. ...¹³¹

Although Schlegel's discipline had a positive effect on study results, it did not make him popular with Borel. At least in his remaining letters and diaries, Borel never showed any liking for Schlegel. His first reference to Schlegel was in a letter to Van Eeden, in which he complained about Schlegel's "cynicism" and "stupidity." This letter has been lost, but Van Eeden's answer dated 20 May 1889 has been kept and was later published by Borel. As often, Van Eeden, who was both a psychiatrist and a literator, showed understanding for Borel's psychological and spiritual problems, and tried to guide and comfort him:

Now I believe I know in which condition, in what "Sturm und Drang" your mind is at the moment. I remember something like it in myself, but that is more than ten years ago. It is the Byron period, the Weltschmerz-, the Werther-period, "the black time" as Beets called it. No wonder that you are so deep into it, because of your many sufferings, and because of the not very fortunate influence of cynical and weak minds such as Schlegel and Ezerman. But thank God I can see that you are stronger than those two and that your healthy vitality grows on regardless.

Therefore I have to say to you explicitly: "Don't let yourself be fooled by all that pseudo and sinister,¹³² don't let yourself be fooled by the cynicism of your stupid professor." ...¹³³

A month later, Borel showed his dislike for Schlegel as a teacher. When Van Eeden had become a member of the venerated Society for Netherlands Literature (*Maatschappij der Nederlandsche Letterkunde*),¹³⁴ Borel wrote to him on the same day (20 June 1889):

You have been nominated as a member of the Society for Netherlands Literature!!! At the same time as Swart Abrahams!¹³⁵ And do you know *who* also participated in the *voting*? Prof. Schlegel, my type of Sledgehammer! I cannot 'take' it.¹³⁶

A year later, Borel wrote to Van Eeden that he often still felt hurt by Schlegel. On the other hand, he felt even more hurt by his father and by former (unworthy) friends whom he tried to get rid of. He wrote in his letter of 19 April 1890:

Recently I was faced with a lot of unpleasantness by my father, and by all those youngsters here whom I have dropped because they hurt me so awfully, even more than Schlegel does, and I wasted my time and my temper. They would never admit such a thing and now they are teasing me. Very annoying, such chuckling and jeering around me, but in fact it is harmless, it is even a little good-natured.¹³⁷

In the same letter, Borel mentioned a row that took place during Schlegel's class. It was the result of a conflict between Borel and Professor Ten Brink:

Ten Brink has vented his anger about me to Schlegel. A scene during class. It was screamingly funny, and Ezerman and I gloated intensely over it.¹³⁸

The next year, Borel even expressed a moral verdict on Schlegel. He believed it was not right to accommodate oneself to him, and he disapproved of his fellow students who in his opinion compromised themselves. But on the other hand, he also was grateful to them for their help. He wrote in his diary in December 1891, when describing all his friends:

Van Wettum and Ezerman—to whom I owe very very much, oh! so much—are afraid and obsequious and very timid towards Schlegel, who is a very evil man.¹³⁹

This may have been the reason why during their studies in Leiden, Ezerman and Van Wettum at Schlegel's request compiled an article for *T'oung Pao*, while Borel did not take part. In 1890, *T'oung Pao*, the first sinological journal in the Western world, had been founded by Schlegel and Henri Cordier, and it was printed at Brill's in Leiden. Schlegel often contributed to the journal, and also gave his students the opportunity to make a contribution. In 1891 Ezerman and Van Wettum published "An alphabetical list of the emperors of China and of their year-titles or nien-hao."¹⁴⁰ Perhaps Borel just lacked the patience to compile such a list.

A few years later when they were studying in China, it became clear that Borel's relation with Schlegel was not so bad after all. Borel kept up a frequent correspondence with his professor, and both he and Van Wettum also published articles in *T'oung Pao*.¹⁴¹ So, in hindsight, Borel's opinion about Schlegel was not entirely negative, as will be seen in the next section.

Schlegel's teaching methods and Borel's studies

Schlegel still taught his students six hours per week, probably on Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday, for two hours from 1 to 3 P.M. at his home,

Rapenburg 51.¹⁴² The curriculum was basically the same as in the 1870s. He again began first teaching his four students the “spoken colloquial” (of Tsiangtsiu) during June and July 1888.¹⁴³ In the following academic year he taught “the spoken language of the Tsiang-tsiu dialect, Chinese moral maxims and oral translations from Dutch into Chinese.” In the (full) second year, he continued teaching the spoken language, adding translation from Chinese into Dutch, to three students. In the third year the curriculum included “translation from Chinese into Dutch, translation of Dutch essays and stories into Chinese (written and oral), and exercises in the Chinese spoken language.”¹⁴⁴ In the last year, he taught “Old-Classical Chinese style, letter style, Chinese accounting, commercial correspondence.” Languages of instruction were Dutch and, in the first and fourth year, also Chinese.¹⁴⁵

As in the 1870s, he did not teach Mandarin, since that was not considered necessary. In any case, he could hardly speak Mandarin. Borel wrote later:

Even one of the greatest sinologists, of whom the Netherlands can be proud, Prof. Dr. G. Schlegel, told us in his classes that he (who only spoke a few Southern Dialects) could not converse with Chinese diplomats and scholars from the North, whom he met at congresses, since he was not able to speak Mandarin.¹⁴⁶

At conferences he communicated with Mandarin Chinese using pencil and paper.¹⁴⁷

The students still copied Schlegel's Tsiangtsiu handbook, which took three years for the slow third group: Van Wettum's copy has on the first page the date 17 June 1888, the second day of the course, and on the last page 15 August 1891.

In the 1870s, Schlegel had complained several times that there were no good language tools for the students. But in 1888, three of the four volumes of Schlegel's Dutch–Chinese dictionary had appeared, and the fourth volume would be completed in 1890.¹⁴⁸ This must have been a great help to the students in making translations from Dutch into Chinese. Moreover, Francken and De Grij's Amoy–Dutch dictionary had appeared in 1882, and although it was not as good as Carstairs Douglas' dictionary, it was certainly useful. Of course, the students would also make use of Williams' and Douglas' dictionaries.

In Borel's letters to Van Eeden, he never mentioned the contents of his Chinese studies. And in his diaries there are only a few references to Chinese and Western texts which were part of the curriculum, all dating from the last year of his studies.

In July 1891, Borel very casually wrote about his translating a fairy tale, showing how he studied together very agreeably with Van Wettum. He also fantasied how he would impress his girl friend's family with the Chi-

nese characters in his diary, and he showed care for his fellow student in a way which some may now find sentimental:

By the way, now something else. I really, really even did some Chinese with Putam. Translated, oh, that lovely fairy tale by Grimm “The willow-wren and the bear” *Xiong yu qiaofuniao* 熊與巧婦鳥 into Chinese.¹⁴⁹ ... How droll to see Chinese in this diary. You see, that’s what I have to “buy” my little wife with from the barbarians¹⁵⁰ and their “conventions” ... I hope that it did some good to Putam to be here, where it is so lovely and full of beauty. We were sitting very enjoyably, with a little cup of coffee and our favourite cigarettes from Algiers (Chebly).¹⁵¹

Half a year later, on 2 January 1892, he was again in the university library studying the *Sacred Edict*, and also a new text, the *Qing Code*. Borel described a typical day of his student life. This description shows how he enjoyed his Chinese studies, which were as usual embedded in his many other activities, such as translating Plato,¹⁵² playing the piano, etc.:

That is how I live these days. It is not good like this, I should get up earlier and go to bed earlier, but if I’m not taking too many risks, I can still keep on this way. I get up around twelve, and then have breakfast, reading in the newspaper or a novel for a while. At half past one I am working on my Chinese in the university library: *Shengyu* 聖諭 *Da Qing lilü* 大清律例, that is the *Sacred Edict* of Emperor Kangxi and the *Civil Code* of the Chinese. When I’m busy with these, I am completely submerged in it. It is so wonderful to find one’s way through all those little strokes, it really gives me pleasure. I’m sitting there until half past three. Then take a walk, and play the piano at home. At half past five dinner—Sometimes read the newspapers and the *Amsterdammer*¹⁵³ in Café Neuf,¹⁵⁴ but very rarely. Right away home again—Make tea—Work on Plato, and review the Chinese of that afternoon once again completely—The rest of my time is divided among playing the piano, translating Plato, and reading (other works of Plato, Shelley and Milton, nowadays). Go to bed around three o’clock, sometimes half past three.¹⁵⁵

A few days later he gave a detailed description of his room, mentioning one Chinese book on his table: “The Book of Songs *Shijing* of the Chinese, bound in snake skin with gold, in beautiful colours.”¹⁵⁶ It was lying on top of the heavy folios of Plato. It was probably Legge’s translation.¹⁵⁷

During their last year they also studied the *Four Books*, at the same time consulting Legge’s translations. Probably inspired by Schlegel’s criticism of the translations by others, Borel had ambitious plans for making new and better translations of the Chinese classics, although at the time his Chinese was not yet good enough and his opinions seem ‘impressionistic’ and subjective. A few years later he would indeed publish his translations of Confucius and Mencius, the first Dutch translations made directly from the Chinese :

This afternoon in the Library I continued translating Plato, and I also studied Confucius and the Chinese classics. I’m beginning to discover treasures

in these. But it's oh so difficult. I must find everything myself, because those translators—mostly British missionaries or professors—can only translate literally, but they do not understand it. Their translations are mostly nonsense, and the strange thing is that they themselves add notes in which they say that they do not understand much of it, and complain “that the Chinese text is so obscure.” But that text is much less obscure than their soul. I am now beginning to fathom those books, but my Chinese is not yet good enough. I will make translations—good ones—of these within five years, that is a great, Good work.¹⁵⁸

In March 1892, just before the end of his studies in Leiden, Borel was reviewing the story “Tenth Daughter Du sinks in wrath a chest full of treasures” (*Du Shiniang nu chen baibaoxiang* 杜十娘怒沉百寶箱) from *Jingu qiguan* 今古奇觀. Perhaps he made use of Van Wetsum's manuscript Chinese text, transcription, and translation, which is now in the Borel Archives.¹⁵⁹ He appreciated its literary and human values, in contrast with De Groot and even Van der Spek almost twenty years earlier. He quoted a poem in full and translated it into Dutch:

In the library, in the afternoon. / I'm again reviewing an old story, from the *Jingu qiguan*, which contains very nice stories and legends. I'll write down the following things, these are very fine poetry: 渾身雅艷遍體嬌香, 兩灣眉畫遠山青, 一對眼明秋水潤, 臉如蓮萼, 唇似櫻桃, 可憐一片無瑕玉, 誤落風塵花柳中。 It is a description of a very pretty, Good girl, who because of misadventure had got onto the wrong track, and ended up in a low-down house: “Her whole body was elegant and pretty / Her whole body was lovely and fragrant. / Her curved eyebrows were like the contours of far-away blue mountains. / Her eyes were clear and soft like the water in autumn. / Her cheeks were like the calyx of the lotus. / Her lips were like red cherries. / How sad that such a spotless gem had chanced to end in wind and dust.” How beautiful this is! How pure.¹⁶⁰

In the margin he made a note showing his interest in Buddhism, which had recently been aroused: “The character for ‘lotus,’ the symbol of the Chinese Buddhists is: 蓮 Liên (5th tone).”¹⁶¹ But following this elegant poem there was also an earthier note typical of Schlegel: “It is peculiar that the Chinese also say ‘taken,’ i.e. made a virgin into a woman 破瓜 [*pogua*], i.e. to break the flower.”¹⁶²

As in the past, Schlegel's curriculum strictly speaking contained nothing but language studies,¹⁶³ but he also inculcated his students with his ideas about China, the Chinese, Chinese philosophy, even modern politics and many other things. Although in his diaries Borel sometimes wrote about Chinese objects of art, he only twice showed a broader interest in Chinese matters. In December 1891, he expressed his sympathy for a Chinese rebellion against the Manchu government, and at the same time gave vent to his aversion to Christian missionaries and European hypocrisy towards China. These opinions were similar to those of Schlegel,¹⁶⁴ and the diary

notes were probably mostly an account of what he had heard in his class, which had aroused fiery emotions in him. Borel later expanded on these ideas in newspaper articles and in “De Chineesche Kwestie” (1900).

Something very beautiful is happening in China. Since centuries and centuries there is a great, heavy, mean Oppression over there. The ruling Dynasty is not Chinese but Manchu-Tatar, the Tai-Tsing (大 ...) who even before ...¹⁶⁵ entered China and conquered the country. The people, seemingly free, are being exploited and maltreated by the Mandarins serving the Emperor. Therefore that great people (400 million) stood still after they were much further developed than we before Christ was born. Now it *finally* has come to an outburst. When in one province a Mandarin again gave orders to carry off women and girls, the people rose up in revolt. It spread over all of China, and it is a beautiful War of Liberation for which I Oh! have such beautiful feelings.

Of course it is accompanied by ugly things, for instance the killing of Christians etc., but that always happens when the people rise in revolt, after so many years of oppression (for instance in 1789).¹⁶⁶ But then, the missionaries should better stay away. The Chinese did not invite them to come. It's none of their business there. They do not content themselves with all that cant and hypocrisy like here all over Europe, where all the barbarians sing psalms on Sunday etc. Everywhere the missionaries come, they sow discord. They destroy whole families, pit people against each other, and all such mean intrigues in order to breed more Christians. (Christianity has always *everywhere* caused murder, fire, and dissension.) Although, like *always*, the manner is not purely beautiful and sometimes horrible, the rebellion itself is an act of great beauty, the struggle of Justice against Injustice, of Freedom against Oppression. It is the beautiful, great Revolution, like it just happened in Chile,¹⁶⁷ and like it will also happen here some time. The beautiful principle of Love and Freedom for which Shelley and all Good People have struggled.

Now you¹⁶⁸ will probably have gained a different impression from what for instance those newspapers write. Those good, virtuous European powers among whom “a cry of outrage came up.” Oh! Oh! How virtuous they are. Do you know why they would shoot and fight? For their dirty *money*. Because they are afraid the harbours will be closed again and then they can no longer traffic in opium with which they poison and kill the people. For anything happening or not happening there in China, Europe doesn't give a damn. It's the money. ...¹⁶⁹

Now if you know all this, and more, then you could scream for laughter, but you should also scream about so much perfidity and presumption, when you read how the allied civilised European fleet is now in Chinese waters, because in China a few of those hypocritical missionaries just happened to lose their lives in such a beautiful, great Revolution against Tyranny and Exploitation.

But probably the fleets cannot do anything about it and the revolution will be victorious. If a hundred thousand Chinese are killed by European bullets, there are still enough to throw all those European intruders and the tyrants back into the sea. The Future will show more of all this.¹⁷⁰

In the spring of 1892, a few months before he left for China, Borel became interested in Buddhism. According to his diary, he was inspired by a lecture

by his friend Frederik van Eeden about “Theosophy in England.”¹⁷¹ The lecture had been given at Minerva, the Clubhouse of the Student Corps in Leiden, on 19 February 1892. It had been organised by the sub-association Doctrina.¹⁷² Borel noted in his diary:

He gave an outline of the new philosophy, Theosophy or Neo-Buddhism. Very, very important. About the soul and the body. About the now almost proven fact that *through* the ages some people *really* were in fellowship with God, and had been initiated into the highest mysteries. People who knew *what* and *how* the soul was, and who could really make their soul *leave* their body and move for enormous distances in a second. Those initiates, adepts, were for instance Vishnu, Buddha, Jesus, Paul, Moses, Pythagoras, Plato, etc.¹⁷³

Inspired by the lecture, Borel borrowed from the library a book on Buddhism, *Manual of Buddhism* by Spence Hardy, “a very wise and I believe Good scholar.”¹⁷⁴ He translated some stories about the Buddha for his girl friend (Christine Zurhaar), and looked forward to his stay in China, where he would have good opportunities to study Buddhism. This latter he must have heard from Schlegel. It was probably the first expression of his romantic adoration for China.

I have already proven that I am very happy that she is so fond of that story about the Buddha by translating another similar very large passage for her. We shall in China see and hear much more about the Buddha. There are thousands of Buddhists in China. In Amoy and Tsiangtsiu, where we will go, there are many Buddhist monasteries and temples—of course, sublimely built, with wonderful sculptures and all kinds of objects. I’ll talk with Buddhist monks, and shall surely get to know a lot of beautiful and new things.¹⁷⁵

In his diaries and letters, Borel had never referred to Schlegel in a sympathetic manner. Perhaps he did feel appreciation, in particular during his last year of study, but he did not write about it. After his appointment in the Indies, he also disclosed the positive effects of Schlegel’s teaching. In a letter to the editor of the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* (NRC) dated 21 December 1894, he showed his indebtedness to Schlegel and his lectures. The letter was published a month later on 23 January 1895, and although its main theme was criticism of Schlegel’s views on the Sino-Japanese war of 1894,¹⁷⁶ he began as follows:

In China it is fitting that a student shows veneration for his teacher, as much as to his own father. Professor Schlegel is my teacher. It was he who with his unequalled tact and his captivating friendliness, initiated me into the mysteries of the Chinese language. His class hours were no gloomy, stuffy things, but they were full of enlightening wisdom and intimate exchanges of ideas. ... and from him I learned to understand the sublime beauty of Chinese literature and philosophy.¹⁷⁷

Borel was even impressed by Chinese ethics to the extent that he began his article by showing the respect indebted to a teacher in Chinese fash-

ion. Clearly, Borel's romantic admiration for China had been fostered by Schlegel:

Prof. Schlegel is known as a hearty admirer of the Chinese, whom he praises to the skies everywhere, right or wrong. I still know how I visualised the Chinese as a result of his warm ideas, a picture of a perfect people with Old-Testament virtues.¹⁷⁸

Compared with his letters and diaries during his studies, Borel would later characterise his teacher in a more mature and sedate manner, just as De Groot did in his later years. In the 1911 article in which he sharply criticised De Groot, he praised his former teacher Schlegel as "one of the greatest sinologists, of whom the Netherlands can be proud."¹⁷⁹ And finally, in 1925, when writing about his Chinese and Dutch teachers, he simply said:

my teacher in Europe, in Leiden, was a very dignified, learned professor, with a ribbon in his buttonhole,¹⁸⁰ and he lived in a large house on the Rapenburg.¹⁸¹

Borel's life in art and culture

During his student years, Borel actively took part in cultural life in The Hague, where he also lived for long periods. His artistic interests were very broad: music, theatre, literature, painting, objects of art. His interest in literature, of course, shared the most common ground with his Chinese studies, as soon as he was advanced enough to read Chinese literature.

In literature he was mainly inspired by his good friend Frederik van Eeden (1860–1932), a famous Dutch writer, philosopher and social reformer, who was one of the protagonists of the Eighties Movement (*Beveging van Tachtig*). This movement had been launched by Van Eeden together with the poets Willem Kloos¹⁸² and Albert Verwey¹⁸³ and others, and strove for a renewal in poetry and prose, but also in art and society. In 1885 they established the literary journal *De Nieuwe Gids* (*The New Guide*), since they could not have their works published in the authoritative literary journal *De Gids* (*The Guide*, 1836–). The esthetic principles of their movement can be summarised as adoration of Beauty as the purpose and essence of art, the principle of *l'art pour l'art*. They rejected the moralising poetry of the previous generation, in particular the 'clergymen's poetry' of Nicolaas Beets and others, and strove to separate art from morality, using purely esthetic criteria for judging art. The movement was also open to new artistic trends such as French Impressionism and Naturalism. It has sometimes been styled the Dutch version of Impressionism. Originally it was an extremely individualistic movement, but later some members also sympathised with socialism and communism, and the importance of

ethics was again recognised. It had a stimulating influence on literature, despite its sometimes overly extreme word-craft. In 1894 the movement as such ended when Kloos left after internal conflicts.¹⁸⁴

Frederik van Eeden had studied medicine in Amsterdam, and hypnosis and suggestion-therapy in Paris, and he worked as a psychiatrist. During his studies in Amsterdam he had come into contact with Kloos, Verwey and others. In 1885 he published in *De Nieuwe Gids* his famous *De kleine Johannes* (Little Johannes),¹⁸⁵ a romantic, idealist, symbolic fairy tale, characterised by a great love of nature (Frederik's father was a botanist) and true simplicity and freshness. It was translated into several languages, and a German translation was even translated into Chinese.¹⁸⁶ Through this story and other lyrical, epic, and dramatic works, Van Eeden became a writer of exceptional importance for Dutch literature and for Dutch national culture. He was also an artist of modern complexity, uneven and unbalanced, a man of contrasts. He wrote much and with ease, but this 'ease' sometimes unfortunately conveyed a distinct sense of self-congratulation, leading the reader's attention away from the subject treated directly to the person of the author. Van Eeden was a man of universal interests including social and religious matters in addition to literature.¹⁸⁷

After Borel came into contact with Van Eeden, he would be an almost life-long friend, and during the first years of their friendship Van Eeden was in many respects his spiritual mentor and advisor.¹⁸⁸ Their first contact was in January 1889, when Borel and Ezerman sent a letter to Van Eeden after reading *Little Johannes*. Borel also sent Van Eeden the first draft of his novel *Het jongetje* (*The little boy*).¹⁸⁹ This autobiographical novel about his love for a girl leading to his expulsion from the HBS in The Hague was later published in 1898;¹⁹⁰ it was at the time very popular and went through at least five reprints. Many years later, Borel would write about Van Eeden's answer:

Thank God he did not write about its literary value (which was at the time almost absent), but its human value. The human factor has always connected me to Van Eeden, not only the literary.¹⁹¹

In his diaries Borel often commented on works of literature, mentioning Paul Verlaine (1844–96), whom he once invited to give a talk in Leiden, and also Keats, Van Eeden, Balzac, Zola, and many others. Borel was already active as a creative writer, writing his novel, poetry in various styles (some poems were later published in *De Gids*) and a play. But at the end of his life, in retrospect, he would state that he was more of a literary critic than a writer.¹⁹²

Borel would later write that actually his main interest was music,¹⁹³ in particular Bach and Wagner.¹⁹⁴ He would often go to concerts in the Kurhaus Concert Hall in Scheveningen, writing down the programme in his

diary. He loved to play the piano, and he often played together or in turns with his fellow students Van Wettum and Ezerman.

He was also deeply interested in modern and older painting; in his diaries he often commented on exhibitions or paintings that he had seen, and painters whom he had visited. He also had a small collection of paintings, etchings and art objects, which he cherished.

Art was extremely important for Borel and took up much more of his attention than his Chinese studies, but this subject is too broad and complex to be treated here fully. Much of Borel can be better understood through an artistic credo which he divulged once in his diary, although his interests were even wider. In this, he described his relation to art and his belief in art, showing both his doubts and sufferings, his heroism and contempt, his passion and elitism. The intensiveness of his feelings betrays the artist he was himself:¹⁹⁵

Art has for some time been for me the romantic, the exotic, the life of courageous, invincible knights, of maidens pure as roes, of magic castles, and evil spirits, of Indians and trappers. That was when I was ten and fourteen, and much later also.

Later I was alone, and I was rolled about by Life like a little boat on a raging sea. The passions, the deadly sins stood suddenly before my eyes, so mighty and great and tempestuous, that I rushed with a scream of pain and happiness into sinful life, in order to perish beautifully and titanically. Then I loved Byron, and *La terre*¹⁹⁶ and everything that continued suffering and living strongly and proudly, with large eyes full of hate or indifference.

In very superior moments I loved Keats, and Shelley, and Milton. With great fervor I hated the public, which venerated De Genestet as the chosen of Parnassus, and which sneered with a little smile at Kloos and Van Deyssel,¹⁹⁷ for the public which applauded Gillet and Strauss, and which I saw yawning and pouring tea at Wagner and Berlioz, for the public that came with its sickening petty arguments of fine respectability and all kinds of 'principles of art' to wage the grotesque war against mighty works of art such as *La terre*, and *Liefde (Love)*,¹⁹⁸ where it saw its own sneakily concealed passions gloriously and cruelly revive, in shameless, fiery nakedness.

Then I came to regard extreme Realism as the One True Art, seeing Life beautiful and great in sin and love. ... I liked to share voluntarily in the suffering life of shameless sinful women, and I intended to become the poet of the voluptuous flesh, of the loveless hearts. My religion was the religion of Hate and Contempt. ...¹⁹⁹

Borel's personal and student life

Henri Borel's family background had a profound influence on him. With his father he not only shared his love for music, but also his rebellious nature. His father, G.F.W. Borel (1834–1907), had a career as an artillery officer in the Dutch army, and he was twice stationed in the Indies,

the second time during the Atjeh War of 1873–5. After his return to the Netherlands he, a captain, criticised the policy and tactics of his highest superior, the venerated General Van Swieten,²⁰⁰ which was a courageous act at the time; it brought him a lot of suffering but also many friends.²⁰¹ In October 1891 he became Governor of the Royal Military Academy (KMA) in Breda. Henri Borel often had conflicts with his father, but he deeply loved his mother, Suzanna Elisabeth Marcella (1839–1910), who suffered from depressions.

Henri was himself an extremely intelligent and sensitive child, but he was also sentimental, quick-tempered and boisterous. During his studies, he suffered from intense and deep fluctuations of emotion. His interest in literature and art gave him inspiration and recognition for his fiery emotions, and Van Eeden was an ideal older friend for him, being both a creative writer and a psychiatrist. During his studies in Leiden and China, Borel wrote sixty-five letters to Van Eeden, while Van Eeden wrote thirteen letters to Borel.²⁰² Besides writing letters, they also met each other often in Leiden, Amsterdam, and Bussum.

Borel wrote extensively about literature, art and his personal problems in his letters to Van Eeden, showing the whole spectrum of his emotions. Soon after they started corresponding in the beginning of 1889, Borel wrote him on 23 April 1889 complaining that he had not received a letter from him for some time. He was desperate because of this, and also because his mother was again to be hospitalised. At that time his Chinese studies seemed without any sense:

I have been angry with you. At the beginning of last week I was at home in an awful mood for four days consecutively. ... And I am so insignificant, so miserable, I can do nothing. I'm learning Chinese! It's infuriating. ... I wish to scream for fear, now, through the very long, dark Breestraat,²⁰³ where the rain falls down ominously with a sinister rhythm, I wish to cry out, in the middle of the dark night, so that people will shiver with chattering teeth in their beds. So, are they going to take her away from me again, again, again?²⁰⁴

No direct answer to this letter has been preserved, and the next letter by Van Eeden, dating from 20 May 1889, shows that it was also for him not so easy to deal with Borel. By that time Borel's mother was already much better. This letter shows how Van Eeden treated him with patience, understanding and honesty:

I didn't write you until now because I was not able to face it. It is my experience that you often misunderstand me and are offended easily by things that are not meant to offend at all. ... In order to clarify your understanding, to bring more order into your thoughts, to end the confusion in your thinking and feeling, a long series of letters or conversations during a long period would be necessary. ...²⁰⁵

In this letter Van Eeden also comforted Borel, who felt hurt by Schlegel and Ezerman. Van Eeden understood his complex train of thought and showed confidence in him:

It is very nice of you, but fortunately not correct, to think that I only contradicted you out of the goodness of my heart but actually fully agreed with you. I might perhaps do so with a patient, whom I considered too weak to take the truth, but not with you. You are sensitive, but not weak. You will not break down under your distress and worries, but you will continuously become stronger.²⁰⁶

Not many of Van Eeden's letters have been preserved from the time of Borel's studies in Leiden, but in each of them Van Eeden reacted in a calm, sedate way to Borel's cries for help. Later, in 1892, Van Eeden comforted and advised Borel as follows:

I hope that you do not know how rare they are, youngsters like you. But they are rare. You lack self-discipline and worldly wisdom, but you can still obtain both of these. For the rest you are a fine boy.²⁰⁷

From his early youth, Borel was extraordinarily fascinated by women. During his studies in Leiden he often wrote about his girl-friends. In the beginning he also met with less reputable girls, such as singers (*chanteuses*) in the *cafés-chantants*. Once he wrote he had visited a girl friend, "a sweet, soft little singer, but not for money," adding: "those girls are fond of me."²⁰⁸ Perhaps also under the influence of Van Eeden, Borel changed his habits. Almost a year later, on 18 March 1890, he wrote in a letter to him:

It is fortunate for me that I turned away from my earlier habits of frequenting *cafés-chantants* and other ugly things. My material life is very, very decent and my only dissipation is a fine cigar or a single glass of beer. I have developed a strong aversion to all those ugly things that I formerly used as a narcotic, and those people here never see me again and no longer understand anything of me.²⁰⁹

But he kept his fascination with women, sometimes wondering why. On 13 December 1890 he wrote in his diary, when he had been skating on the Pond in The Hague:

Now there, when I was at the first Pond with Van Wettum and about to go home, suddenly the blue girl with her golden hair came and said: "Hello Henri" (that name she heard from Amaatje). And then I almost went crying on the ice. Fortunately Putam didn't notice it. I had forgotten everything, of her environment. She was something new, something blond, something girl, something angel.

I was so happy. I gave her my hand and walked with her for a moment. I said she was so sweet. I looked at her in such a manner that she should have kissed me like a little sister, but she didn't. I don't wish to know what she was thinking, but she liked me very much. [page cut out] How soft she was, how warm, how very blond, and how small she still was. Suddenly she was my

honey. And it often happens like that. Why would it be so? ... Actually I don't care why this is so, anyhow I can't do anything about it.²¹⁰

Some time in 1890, he became acquainted with the 18-year old Christine Zurhaar, which brought about a new phase in his emotional life. She had received little formal education and felt deep admiration for Borel. She became his girlfriend, and in February 1891 he wrote to Van Eeden that he was very happy with her.²¹¹ But it would have been untypical of Borel if no other problems arose. The next month he wrote to Van Eeden: "Now she has returned to her parents and I have to marry her because she has been my wife."²¹² Her father only allowed Borel to see her once a week on Sundays to take a walk, but this was unacceptable for him.²¹³ Then her father required Borel to promise in the presence of two witnesses that he would marry her.²¹⁴ The situation remained in an impasse until Christine's elder sister helped to find some viable arrangement. At Borel's request, Van Eeden tried to intervene several times; he also met Christine's parents twice, but to no avail.²¹⁵ When Borel asked him later, he refused, since there was nothing he could do.²¹⁶ Another half year later, after Borel entered the Colonial service, he finally married Christine Zurhaar on 8 June 1892. They went to live in Delft²¹⁷ for a few months, and in August she accompanied him to China. Borel was the first sinologist to take along his wife to China. This was again a nonconformist decision on his part. In view of his volatile and sensitive nature, it was also a wise one.

When Borel described his friends in his diary on 15 July 1891, he called Van Eeden his 'best friend.' His other two best friends at the time were B.J.F. Varenhorst (1858–1930), the teacher of Dutch language who came to the HBS in The Hague in 1883, with whom Borel had had the conflict leading to his expulsion, and whom he had met again by chance. The third best friend was the artist Johan Thorn Prikker (1868–1932), with whom Borel would correspond for several years after he left Leiden in 1892.²¹⁸ Some other friends were the poet Robert Stellwagen,²¹⁹ the student at the Indies Institute in Leiden G.J. Staal,²²⁰ and the pianist and former classmate in The Hague Karel Textor.²²¹ Finally, Borel also mentioned his two remaining fellow students, Van Wettum and Ezerman, as good friends to whom he owed very much.

From his letters to Van Eeden, it becomes clear that his fellow students were not as important as his other friends, although to a certain extent they shared Borel's interests in literature, art and music, and often accompanied him to concerts and other activities. All three played the piano, and when they were together, they liked to play by turns, listening to each other. Borel also played duets (*à quatre mains*) with Van Wettum.²²²

The first letter from Borel to Van Eeden in 1889 was written together with Ezerman, and later Borel took him along to see Van Eeden and often

mentioned him in his letters. But in the meantime, both in his letters and in his diaries, he often wrote that he felt a growing aversion to Ezerman.

I like Ezerman less and less. Perfidious without knowing it himself, egoist, small, ugly and just because of some beautiful things it becomes worse. Sometimes he gives me the impression of being an insect, or Uriah Heep. Sometimes I find him suddenly so poor, so poor—when he plays well (although that is rare)—and then I feel a little pity for him.²²³

Borel still got along well with Ezerman, and later they often went together to concerts, exhibitions etc.

Borel called Van Wettum his “most loyal friend,” with whom he often studied together and made music. At the end of the second year, Van Wettum’s family had objections against their friendship, perhaps because they worried that Borel might be a bad influence on Van Wettum.

Problems again. And now from the Van Wettum family. I feel sorry about this. Whoever of the other ‘friends’ disappointed or offended me, both in joy and grief Bertus always remained loyal to me. I find him simple, sometimes pedantic, and someone who first has to see everything from others, who has nothing out of himself, but he has ... a heart of gold. ... What a pity that his family in their stupidity are always setting him against me.²²⁴

Despite their close friendship, when Borel was in distress, he was also particular about Van Wettum:

Also Bertus van Wettum, the loyal, noble Putam of before, has lost ground with me. During the great recent emergency, he stayed loyal until the end. But still it went out of tune, and became lesser, weaker. If it would have gone on a few months longer, I would have lost him also.

But now I have overcome everything so peacefully. And I still have him. I still like him very much. He can remain my friend.²²⁵

When Van Wettum was unhappy and indulged in romantic phantasies, Borel felt sympathy and cared for him:

Putam had bought the poems of Elizabeth Barret Browning.²²⁶ ... I find Putam lately very unhappy. He will feel even more unhappy if he clings to that silly idea of suddenly meeting someone like Elizabeth Barret. ... He lets me talk, loses himself in Buddha, Jesus, John, etc.²²⁷

After Goteling Vinnis stopped his Chinese studies in February 1890, he still kept in touch with Borel. When Borel visited him in September 1890, he was shown some of his works of art. Borel was greatly impressed: “That Goteling is an artist, that’s for sure.”²²⁸ At his request he sent a water-colour to Van Eeden to hear his opinion.²²⁹ But a few months later—perhaps after Van Eeden had given his opinion—Borel’s opinion changed, and when he saw the water-colour again, he decided Goteling was not an artist after all, and he felt an aversion to him: “So at the time it was a wrong kind of enthusiasm on my part, ‘Youthful folly.’”²³⁰

In the field of literature, in particular concerning his own writings, Borel sometimes felt a gap between himself and his friends and fellow students. When he let them read his 'book,' probably his manuscript of *The Little Boy* (*Het jongetje*), he was disappointed by their reaction:

Ezerman, Staal and Textor found it sublime. But what does that mean? Not so much. Ezerman found parts of it 'immense' etc. etc. But his whole life is still just as turbulent and ugly and he behaves as if he hasn't read it at all. The same is true of Van Wettum. Don't these mean little men understand that they keep me away from themselves *by going on to live so pettily* after reading my book? That I'm forced to be so boisterous and pseudo-Sturm und Drang in their company? I feel that they are slowly disappearing out of my heart now that it is becoming so holy in there.²³¹

In his diary Borel was sometimes haughty and contemptuous towards his friends and fellow students, but he once apologised for this and explained it:

I wish to note down that those who will read this later including myself, if I dig it up later, should not think that I think and write harshly or cruelly about my friends. I often have a go at Ezerman, Van Wettum, Staal and sometimes even Van Eeden (towards the latter mostly unjustified, not always). But that is only in some, not always nice moods.²³²

Borel was not so active in sports as De Groot and Van der Spek had been. His major sport was taking walks, in particular during the last year of study in Leiden. He once described such a walk in his diary:

What a busy day today. This morning Chinese. This afternoon Chinese. Then I really had to take a walk. Now I always take the road to Warmond. What a lovely road. On the left, on the right, everywhere, wide, the landscape, where the cows are grazing. ...²³³

Another sport most students liked was skating, and Borel was no exception. He wrote in his diary:

This afternoon I skated on the ice delightfully. I can do it very fast again, but still not like in Roermond, I think. First with Bertus and Willem van Wettum²³⁴

The next day he skated from Leiden to The Hague:

This afternoon I came here from Leiden on skates together with Putam. Then I skated on the Pond until half past 5. Delightful that way, in the dark over the soft blue ice, with here and there a twinkle.²³⁵

Cycling was a new sport that was becoming popular in those days. In the beginning Borel wrote to Van Eeden, at the same time showing concern for Ezerman:

Nowadays Ezerman is practicing the bicycle. However, we can only do it very rarely (for the time being), because it's too expensive. I believe it is very good for him.²³⁶

The graduation of the third group (1892)

After Schlegel had announced in July 1891 that the students of the third group would need a fourth year of study in Leiden, he was told to report to the Minister as soon as they were ready. A year later, on 31 May 1892, he wrote that they could now go to Amoy to complete their studies. By May he had probably stopped teaching them. He asked to be told the date of departure as soon as possible, adding thoughtfully:

In view of the summer heat which is almost unbearable in China, I would like Your Excellency to take into consideration not to have the said youngsters leave from here before the month of August. Towards September the greatest heat in China will have gone.²³⁷

All three students sent letters with health certificates and documents showing fulfilment of military obligations, and they all asked for the special advance payment of f400 for books. Each of them also had a special request, in part repeating Schlegel's suggestion. Van Wettum wrote that he preferred to leave the Netherlands by the end of August due to family circumstances. He had fulfilled his military obligations by appointing a substitute. Ezerman also asked permission to stay until the end of August, since he would come of age (at 23 years) on 24 August and his presence here would save a lot of trouble in arranging family affairs. He had fulfilled his military obligations by paying for a substitute. And last but not least, Borel announced that he had just married Maria Christine Zurhaar on 8 June 1892, and wished to travel with her to China. He had already been exempted from military service in March 1889, because of inflammation or atrophy of the optic nerve.²³⁸ The report of the medical examination now showed that he was "cursed with myopia in both eyes," for which he was wearing spectacles, but he was considered fit for civil service in the Indies.²³⁹

By Royal Decree of 15 July 1892 no. 22, all three were assigned to the Governor-General, thus entering the colonial service. The usual advantages were to be given them, and Borel was to be accompanied by his wife. Schlegel's request was met with, and the students were ordered to travel on the *Calédonien*, leaving from Marseille on 4 September, to go first to Hong Kong and to report to the Consul there. Their assignment was published in the *Staatscourant* and also in the sinological journal *T'oung Pao*.²⁴⁰

Borel and his wife left the Netherlands on 24 August, sent off by Varenhorst to Brussels.²⁴¹ Van Wettum and Ezerman probably left a little later because of their personal affairs. All travelled as usual by train via Paris to Marseille. The boat trip was now again shorter than ten years earlier; it took only one month, and after leaving Marseille on 4 September, they arrived in Hong Kong on 5 October, where the Consul immediately ar-

ranged for their trip from Hong Kong to Amoy.²⁴² They arrived in Amoy on 6 October.²⁴³

In 1890 for the first time a Dutch professional Consul had been stationed in Amoy: P.S. Hamel (1845–1900), with the personal title of Consul General. He succeeded the German mercantile Consul A. Piehl, who had been Consul for the Netherlands from 1884 to 1890. This was mainly in order to arrange the emigration of Chinese workers to the Indies and other East Indies affairs. When the Dutch Minister Resident and Consul General in China, J.H. Ferguson, reported Hamel's appointment to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, he also wrote that J. Rhein²⁴⁴ would be transferred there to act as an interpreter. According to Ferguson, Rhein was in every respect a capable interpreter, who not only knew Mandarin but also Southern dialects. Therefore, he announced, this would be a favourable opportunity to send Dutch students to Amoy.²⁴⁵ However, two years later, when the students arrived in Amoy, both officials had already left. Rhein had only worked in Amoy for a few months when the Minister ordered him to return to Peking, and Hamel had to find a native interpreter.²⁴⁶ In June 1892, Hamel also left Amoy. He returned to the Netherlands because of a serious mental disease,²⁴⁷ and was succeeded by the German Consul Ch.K. Feindel as acting Consul General for the Netherlands. On 25 September 1892, Rhein was also suddenly struck by insanity; he was transported to Shanghai where he passed away on 9 October.²⁴⁸ Thus nothing remained of the 'favourable opportunity,' and the students were now received by the German Consul Feindel.

The fourth examination: Van de Stadt, De Bruin, and Thijssen (1892)

A few months after Schlegel had announced that his three students of the third group would be ready to proceed to China during the next summer, on 2 November 1891 he wrote another letter to the new Minister of Colonies, W.K. *baron* van Dedem. Now he again took the initiative as he had done in the 1870s and proposed to call for another new group of three students at the beginning of the next year to supply future needs. Schlegel argued that there were now only five interpreters in the Indies, and two were on leave in the Netherlands, while according to him another seven places had had prescribed (*organiek*) Chinese interpreters and two other places should have interpreters.²⁴⁹ Therefore, he calculated, there was a need for nine interpreters, while only the two interpreters on leave in the Netherlands and the three students would be eligible, so four places would remain vacant. Moreover, Von Faber and Schaalje, who had been in function for 31 and 27 years respectively, had already long been eligible for a pension. If they left, only three interpreters would remain in the Indies

and the number of vacancies would amount to eleven. Schlegel calculated that every four years at least two new interpreters should be trained.²⁵⁰

He reminded Van Dedem of his *nota* of 8 March 1875, in which he had in vain pleaded for the establishment of a training college for interpreters. The training of new students had taken place at very long intervals in a haphazard manner—namely, for six students in 1873–8 and for three in 1888–92, starting only when the old corps had almost become extinct (*uitgestorven*) instead of regularly filling the vacancies.²⁵¹ The urgent need of interpreters could be seen from a newspaper clipping that Schlegel had pasted on his letter; it quoted Pieter Brooshooft²⁵² in *De Locomotief*:

The constant absence of a Chinese interpreter in a commercial town like Semarang is not right and is being felt even more urgently because of the latest Chinese cases of bankruptcy. Some business firms here will, I heard, at their own expense invite an interpreter from Surabaya to check the accounts of the bankrupt Tjoa Tjoen Kang.²⁵³

Therefore Schlegel urged to arrange, as soon as possible, a competitive examination for Chinese student-interpreters.

Minister Van Dedem forwarded a copy of this letter to Governor-General Pijnacker Hordijk, asking if it was necessary to train interpreters, and he also notified Schlegel.²⁵⁴

Pijnacker Hordijk replied on 2 January 1892 that it was desirable to train another three students, adding a copy of the advice of the Director of Justice, W.A. Engelbrecht. To the question whether, and if so, how many students should be trained, the latter had answered that there were prescribed nine Chinese interpreters (instead of Schlegel's number of fourteen); now actually there were five, so there were four vacancies. Engelbrecht was not too enthusiastic about the usefulness of the interpreters:

There is no indication that the lack of interpreters in those places led to any inconvenience in the government service, nor that it would be necessary to expand the prescribed number of places.²⁵⁵

However, his sound bureaucratic conclusion was that the corps should be kept complete as much as possible, and that three students should be trained.

On 20 February 1892, Minister Van Dedem again notified Schlegel of Pijnacker Hordijk's answer and asked him when candidates should be summoned for the examination, and when they should begin their studies in Leiden. At the same time Schlegel was asked to act as chairman of the examination committee and to submit a proposal for its members.²⁵⁶

Within two weeks Schlegel replied that the examination should take place in May, because he had to attend all sessions and could not teach at the same time.²⁵⁷ It would be best to publish the announcement right away, in order that the candidates could get prepared.²⁵⁸

Minister Van Dedem agreed, and the announcement was published in the *Staatscourant* of 13–14 March 1892 (no. 62). The text was exactly the same as in 1888. No examination fees were required despite the advice of the previous committee.

On 20 April, Schlegel presented a list of committee members, who were the same as in 1888 with but two exceptions.²⁵⁹ Van Dedem wrote the committee members, and told Schlegel it was not desirable to ask for an examination fee of *f*25. It would be better to stop examining a candidate who immediately appeared below the mark, and to make arrangements for this in order that not too much time would be needed for the weaker ones.²⁶⁰

The examination took place from 2 to 18 May. There were 26 candidates, one of whom withdrew during the examination. The committee reported that the level of the candidates was not favourable, but much better than in 1888. Six had satisfactory results in all respects; ten had an average score of more than 5, while in 1888 nine out of 33 candidates had achieved such a score.²⁶¹ But most candidates were much younger than in 1888, and almost none had already passed the HBS examination—fifteen were attending the HBS, two the *gymnasium*; only four had finished the HBS, and one the *gymnasium*. The top candidate unanimously recommended by the committee was only 16 years old. This time the ranking list was in accordance with the total scores. The scores of the three best candidates were as follows:

Subject	Van de Stadt	De Bruin	Thijssen
Dutch	7	7	8
French	8	6	6
English	7	7	6
German	8	8	4
History	6	7	7
Geography	4	8	8
Arithmetic and Bookkeeping	5	4	5
Physics and Cosmography	8	5	5
Natural History	7	4	7
total score	60	56	56
average score	6 6/9	6 1/9	6 1/9
'corrected total'	80	74.66	74.66
ranking order	1	2	3

Other comments were added to these scores. Van de Stadt was “exceptionally well-educated, bright and lucid”; De Bruin was “well-educated” and Thijssen “well-educated, but less refined.”²⁶² Peter Adriaan van de

Stadt (16) was the youngest son of a physics and cosmography teacher and vice-director of the HBS in Arnhem. Annes Gerhardus de Bruin (18) was the second son of a shopkeeper in Deventer. Emile Franciscus Thijssen (almost 19) was the only son of a career officer in the Netherlands Army who had passed away, and he was living in The Hague. All three were attending the fifth grade of the HBS.

This time the examination was probably organised similarly to that of 1888. The examination papers are still extant. Now not only translations from Dutch into the three foreign languages were required, but also vice versa. As subjects for the Dutch essay, Van de Stadt chose “The cultivation system” (*Het cultuurstelsel*), De Bruin “Prince William IV” (*Prins Willem IV*), and Thijssen “The foreign policy of Jan de Wit” (*De buitenlandse staatkunde van Jan de Wit*). Other subjects were also historical, namely “Daendels”, “Oldenbarneveldt” and “The Year 1813” (*Het jaar 1813*). No essays in foreign languages have been found, so this item was probably no longer required.²⁶³

At the medical examination of the three candidates, it was found that Van de Stadt’s left eye only had 1/3 eyesight, and De Bruin was missing the second finger of his right hand, but they were still considered fit. They were notified that they were to be assigned to Schlegel after the summer holiday.²⁶⁴

On 29 August, the three students were told that classes were to begin on Tuesday 13 September 1892 at one o’clock, and that their allowances would be paid from that date. They were also told that they should reside in Leiden during their whole study period, and would be under the supervision of Schlegel, including moral supervision (*zedelijk toezicht*).²⁶⁵

The studies and graduation of the fourth group (1892–1895)

The curriculum was again similar to the one in the 1870s. In his reports to the University, Schlegel wrote that during the first year he taught six hours per week to three students. The subjects were: “Oral exercises in speaking and translating from Dutch into Chinese; learning by heart short Chinese sayings in the literary language.”²⁶⁶ During the second year the subjects included: “Selections from ancient authors, the Sacred Edict of the Kangxi Emperor, Chinese novel literature, exercises in the spoken language.”²⁶⁷ During the third year he taught seven hours per week to four students (probably including one auditor). The subjects were: “Spoken language, Chinese law, customs and manners, and Chinese sayings.” Languages of instruction were always Dutch and Chinese.²⁶⁸ He may have taught two classes, one on language for six hours, and one on law and customs for

one hour per week. This would be a second example of Schlegel explicitly teaching general cultural subjects (after Lind). The fourth group finished the course in a little more than three years, just as the first and second groups had.

Little is known about their student life. On 30 September 1892, two weeks after the beginning of the course, Van de Stadt registered as a student of the Faculty of Arts at Leiden University. He became a member of the Student Corps, so he probably had the same motive for registering as De Groot had had twenty years earlier. Two years later the other students also registered as students of the same Faculty, but without becoming Corps members.²⁶⁹ It is not known why they registered, or based on which qualifications. Perhaps Schlegel urged them to do so to upgrade the status of his course.²⁷⁰

Hardly anything is known about their studies with Schlegel. In their last year, a few weeks after the reorganisation of the corps and the moratorium had been announced, Minister Bergsma asked Schlegel for budgetary reasons when the present students could leave for China. Schlegel immediately replied that the candidate-officials could leave at the end of the year, for instance in November.²⁷¹

And indeed, on 10 October 1895, Schlegel announced that De Bruin, Thijssen, and Van de Stadt would be ready to go to China at the beginning of December. He took good care of his students, and asked for speedy payment of the gratification and advance payment for books. He also requested that their financial affairs in China be arranged.²⁷² Evidently he wished to avoid the problems with travel expenses and allowances in China of the previous group.²⁷³

Thereupon Schlegel was asked the reason for the change in the ranking order of the students, since Van de Stadt was no longer the top candidate.²⁷⁴ He replied as follows:

For the change of ranking number I have well-founded reasons. Mr. Van de Stadt did not come up to the expectations which I had about him on the basis of his entrance examination, and both of his colleagues, De Bruin and Thijssen, have outpaced him widely.

Whether the circumstance that Mr. Van de Stadt registered as a member of the Leiden Student Corps (which both others did not) had any influence on his studies, his student life distracting him too much, I dare not decide. He had no lack of talent, but lacked diligence and perseverance.

Perhaps he can still make up for this neglect in China, but for the moment I have to put him in the third place on the ranking list.

Mr. De Bruin is without doubt the brightest of the three candidates.²⁷⁵

When Schlegel announced that the students were ready, the Minister did not tell him in his reply of 12 November that his monthly allowance of £100 would end almost immediately, but someone wrote in the margin of

the draft letter: “Prof. Schlegel would understand that his allowance will be paid for the last time over October; it is not necessary to inform him.” However, Schlegel was surprised not to receive an allowance over November, and in December he therefore wrote to a *referendaris* at the Ministry of Colonies complaining: “Since the said officials only left for China at the beginning of December, and I more or less taught them until the last day, I am of the opinion that I should still have a right to that allowance.” He was then told that he would still receive *f*100 for November, with the explanation that at the Ministry it was thought the training had ended when Schlegel announced on 10 October that the students could leave.²⁷⁶ In 1878, Schlegel’s allowance had already stopped a month before the students left, so the supposition at the Ministry was not unfounded, but this time Schlegel was probably even less eager to let go of his main function (and its extra salary) than before.

All three underwent a medical examination and were found fit. The military obligations of the two older students had been taken care of: De Bruin was exempted because of ‘brother service’ (*broederdienst*) and Thijsen because he was the only legal son. The younger Van de Stadt could not guarantee that he had fulfilled his obligation; on 24 October he had drawn his lot, but the Council of the Militia would not meet before December. He expected that he would be exempted since he had two elder brothers, one of whom had already paid for a substitute. But the Minister warned him that in case he was obliged to pay for a substitute, and did not do so, he would not be appointed and would have to return all expenses incurred for him! All three stated that they were unmarried and did not plan to marry before leaving for China. They entered into the Colonial service on 12 November 1895.²⁷⁷ This was announced in the *Staatscourant* and in *T’oung Pao*.²⁷⁸

They left on the *Calédonien* from Marseille on 8 December 1895²⁷⁹ and arrived in Hong Kong on 8 January 1896, where they were received by the Dutch Consul General for Southern China, F.J. Haver Droeze. From there they took the steamship *Haitan* on 10 January²⁸⁰ and soon arrived in Amoy, where they were probably received by Consul Feindel.

In January 1896, after the last group of students had left, the Ministers of Colonies Bergsma and of Home Affairs Van Houten proposed to the Queen-Widow and Regent Emma to afford a royal decoration to Schlegel in recognition of his merits in the training of Chinese interpreters for more than twenty years. In their letter they also mentioned that Schlegel was well-known because of his Dutch–Chinese dictionary.²⁸¹ By Royal Decree of 3 February 1896 (no. 19) Schlegel was appointed a Knight in the Order of the Dutch Lion (*Ridder in de Orde van den Nederlandschen Leeuw*).²⁸²

The reorganisation of the interpreter corps and another moratorium

Almost two years later, on 24 April 1894, a long article appeared in the newspaper *Algemeen Handelsblad* entitled “Interpreters and language teachers” (*Tolken en taalmeesters*). It was written by an unknown journalist who often based himself on “in every respect competent” sources. Perhaps one of these was the interpreter Stuart, who was then on leave and studying at the Indies Institute in Delft in 1893–4. He was preparing for the Higher Officials Examination, which he would pass a few months later.²⁸³ The author stated that the system of European interpreters of Chinese showed many defects. According to the Colonial budget, there were ten such interpreters for the Chinese language. In actual fact, they were nowhere working as interpreters, but were scholarly advisors (*wetenschappelijke adviseurs*) of the government. However, their social position (including their salary) in the Indies was not in accordance with their function and their expensive studies; therefore several of them had left and gone on to pursue other careers. On the budget there were also five officials for the native languages,²⁸⁴ who had a higher salary, and there was no reason why scholars of Chinese should lag behind those of Javanese. The author gave a historical overview of the Chinese interpreter system and listed some of the most important scholarly and other contributions of the interpreters. According to competent observers, the number of interpreters could be diminished; the work of interpreting should be left to the Chinese, and the European interpreters should be made into “advisors for Chinese affairs” (*adviseurs voor Chineesche zaken*). They should be given a higher salary in accordance with their competence, and their salary should not be lower than that of East Indies officials. The Government of the Indies in 1879 had considered four interpreters enough, and in 1889–90 there were only four or five in actual service, without any harm to the service of the country, but the author could not judge how large the number should be. In any case, the budget money would be better spent if the number were smaller and the salary higher. Also the language teachers, whose function was not entirely clear to the author, should be better paid. Finally, the author suggested that the Government should ask the advice of the Vice-President of the Council of the Indies, who was also ‘honourary advisor for Chinese affairs.’ He did not mention his name: W.P. Groeneveldt.

A month later, this article was reprinted in two Indies newspapers, and summarised in *De Indische Gids*.²⁸⁵ Half a year later, Groeneveldt took an initiative, but without referring to this article. This initiative would lead to a reorganisation of the interpreter corps, and also to a second moratorium in Schlegel’s training course in Leiden.

The Governor-General was obliged to consult the Council of the Indies in certain cases, but the Council was also entitled to make proposals on its

own initiative.²⁸⁶ At the meeting of the Council on 28 September 1894, Groeneveldt, who had been Vice-President since 1893, suggested making use of this right to make a proposal for the reorganisation of the corps of European interpreters for the Chinese language. At the same meeting he offered a *nota* on this subject as a draft proposal; this was circulated among the four other members of the Council.

In this *nota*, Groeneveldt first recounted the earlier efforts to reduce the number of interpreters in 1879 by Minister O. van Rees and the rejection of that policy in 1886 by Minister Sprenger van Eijk. In contrast to the latter, he could not imagine in what circumstances more interpreters would be needed. He therefore repeated his plea of 1878, arguing elaborately why the number should be reduced to at most five, although not too strictly. The reason still was that the interpreters actually did not have enough work to do. He illustrated this with his own experience in Pontianak (Borneo) [in 1864–70], where he had hardly anything to do as interpreter and translator, but used his time profitably by performing other tasks for the Resident—ironically, since in 1885 the urgent need for an interpreter on Borneo had been one of the reasons for the new training course. Groeneveldt argued that the surplus of interpreters should be similarly used in other positions. Many interpreters, highly educated men, were actually eager to leave their corps, and by 1894 three of them had already passed the Higher Officials Examination (De Jongh, Hoetink, Stuart). It could be advisable to allow the other interpreters exemption from this examination.

The interpreters should be consulted more often by the government, and should not be regarded as mere interpreters. They should be made “Officials for Chinese Affairs” (*ambtenaar voor Chineesche zaken*) with a certain jurisdiction (*ressort*), where all authorities could ask for their advice. They should be relieved of their specific function of interpreter, although they could still do translation and interpretation work that could not be done by Chinese. With their higher position, they should also receive a better salary equal to that of the Officials for East Indies Languages. Originally, emoluments from translation work had been expected, but these proved to be very few, so that in effect their salary was not as high as that of normal East Indies officials. But their allowance as extraordinary members of the Orphans and Estate Chambers could be abolished, and the (little) work to be done could be included in their function. Groeneveldt gave detailed computations for their actual and proposed salaries and periodical raises, and for elaborate transitional conditions. He expected that even if these measures were implemented, many interpreters or Officials for Chinese Affairs would still prefer to leave the corps. Their position had the disadvantage that they did not have fixed responsibilities (*geen vasten kring van bemoeiens*), since they always had to wait for requests from others to become engaged in any task.

Groeneveldt's proposal comprised five points:

- I. The title of the Chinese interpreters should be changed to "Officials for Chinese Affairs."
- II. The Officials for Chinese Affairs should upon request give advice and information about Chinese affairs to the authorities of a certain jurisdiction (*ressort*), and do oral and written translations.
- III. [a] The number of Officials for Chinese Affairs should be preferably five. But if there are more available, they should also be appointed. [b] In case of a surplus, those suitable should be transferred to other functions and if necessary exemption from taking the Higher Officials Examination should be given.
- IV. The salary should be raised to the level of East Indies language officials.
- V. The new regulation should take effect on 1 January 1896.

The *nota* was circulated among the members of the Council of the Indies and discussed at the meeting of 5 October. Four members were present: W.P. Groeneveldt; W.O. Gallois, former Government Secretary; J. Mullemeister, former Resident of Yogyakarta; and Mr. W.A. Engelbrecht, former Vice-President of the High Court and former Director of Justice. The fifth member, E.A. Rovers, former Director of Finance, was absent.²⁸⁷

All present agreed with points I-III [a], but Mullemeister and Engelbrecht objected to points III [b] (transfer to other functions and exemption from the Higher Officials Examination) and IV (higher salary). Mullemeister stated first that in the *nota* no account was taken of the high training expenses for these officials, which amounted to about *f*12,000 more than for a normal East Indies official. Therefore they should be "kept like gold" for their original function. But since there were now ten interpreters, and another three were being trained in the Netherlands, the latter should take a different course and be trained as East Indies officials. And the three students who had just finished their studies should also temporarily be appointed in other positions until one or more of the five prescribed (*organiek*) positions became vacant. There was no reason to change their financial position, since their studies had all been paid for by the Government; their actual maximum income was about *f*900 to *f*1,000 per month (higher than Groeneveldt had stated because of their emoluments and allowances from the Orphans Chamber), and their function was in some places a sinecure; therefore they had much free time for their own studies. Mullemeister ended with the rhetorical question: How many people are in such a favourable position?²⁸⁸

Governor-General Van der Wijck agreed with points I-III [a] and [b] of Groeneveldt's *nota*, so he was in favour of exempting the interpreters

from the Higher Officials Examination. But he immediately agreed with Mullemeister's and Engelbrecht's opinion about the interpreters' salary. He supported the reduction of the number of interpreters even more, since S.W. Tromp, Resident of Western Borneo, had written him after Van Wetum's appointment there, saying he did not need an interpreter.²⁸⁹ He sent a letter with Groeneveldt's *nota* and the Council's advice to Minister of Colonies J.H. Bergsma on 20 January 1895. The matter of the future disposition of the present students in Leiden was to be decided by the Minister.²⁹⁰

Minister Bergsma reported to Queen Emma on 22 April 1895, sending a proposal for the reorganisation of the corps of European interpreters. In his report he began by saying that in the strict sense there was no 'corps': appointment, instruction, title, function and income had never been statutorily (*organiek*) regulated, but only by way of Government decisions. In 1879 it had already appeared that the system was defective. After reading Groeneveldt's *nota*, the advice of the Council, and the Governor-General's letter, the Minister stated that he agreed with the Council and was against exemption from taking the Higher Officials Examination. This could only be given to individuals, not to a certain category of persons, because in that case all those with a doctorate in the East Indies languages or in law could also ask for such an exemption. He was of the opinion that the training, formation, appointment, title, function and income of these officials should be arranged by Royal Decree. Only their instruction and the places of appointment were to be decided upon by the Governor-General.

The new regulations were confirmed by the Royal Decree of 26 April 1895 no. 16 and published in the *Staatscourant* on 1 May 1895 (no. 101). The conditions of the competitive examination and study were the same as those in the Ministerial resolution of 1873. The major additions and changes were as follows.

There were to be officials in East Indies service with the title of Officials for Chinese Affairs (*ambtenaren voor Chineesche zaken*), falling under the Department of Justice (art. 1). Their number should preferably be five, and their place of stationing and function should be arranged by the Governor-General (art. 2). There were minor changes in their salary, for instance that leaves of absence did not count toward increases in salary (art. 3). The students were now no longer called *élèves*, but 'Candidate-Officials for Chinese Affairs' (art. 8). Only those who had finished the training course could be appointed (art. 4), and the conditions of appointment were the same as in 1873, but subject to the minor changes of 1893:²⁹¹ the total length of study was now six years with a maximum of two years in China (art. 5), and the allowance in China was to be paid in hard guilders instead of Mexican dollars (art. 9). The candidate-officials could now also take along their legal family to China (art. 9), and could obtain an advance payment of f400 for books (art. 10). There were also transitional provisions (art. 11-12).

The journalist who had written the article in the *Algemeen Handelsblad* one year earlier was pleasantly surprised about this news, which he had read in the *Staatscourant*. His comment was: “Fruits do not always ripen so quickly with the government in the Indies!”²⁹² But he had hoped for change in one other important respect: the salary of the interpreters was insufficient compared with that of the Officials for East Indies Languages, and it could never surpass that of an Assistant-Resident. He suggested that the Minister could still amend this in the budget for 1896.²⁹³

A few days after publication in the *Staatscourant*, the Minister notified Schlegel of the Royal Decree and added that for the time being, probably for several years, no new students should be accepted.²⁹⁴ This latter point was also officially announced in the *Staatscourant* of 7 May 1895 (no. 106). As a result, a second moratorium in the training course began, and for the next eleven years no students for the East Indies service were taught Chinese in Leiden. Schlegel never again trained such students,²⁹⁵ and he completely stopped teaching in June 1902 because of blindness; he passed away in 1903. His successor J.J.M. de Groot began to train a new group of four students in 1907.

The current students were of course very much interested in the new regulations. By the end of May, Van de Stadt's father wrote a letter to the Minister asking for a copy of the text, and a few days later copies would be sent to all three students.²⁹⁶

Governor-General Van der Wijck immediately published the Royal Decree in the *Staatsblad van Ned.-Indië* no. 135 (order of 27 June 1895), but it took a little longer before it was implemented. Almost a year after its publication in the *Staatscourant*, Minister Bergsma wrote to Van der Wijck that he had thought that after the publication of the Royal Decree, the Chinese interpreters would be appointed as Officials for Chinese Affairs, but in the Indies Government Almanac (*Regeeringsalmanak*) of 1896 there still were ‘European interpreters for the Chinese language.’²⁹⁷ The matter was solved two months later, when on 21 May 1896 Van der Wijck decided upon and published the “Provisions for the designation of places of stationing and arrangement of the function of the Officials for Chinese Affairs.”²⁹⁸ These new measures were implemented on 1 October 1896, when almost all interpreters were reappointed as Officials for Chinese Affairs.

Extraordinary students in the 1890s: S.H. Schaank, J.H. Kann, E. von Zach

After the last three students had left, Schlegel continued to teach or help extraordinary students. The most important of these was his earlier student S.H. Schaank. After Schaank's return to the Indies in 1886, he had

been stationed in Western Borneo, successively in Sambas, Montrado, and Lara and Lumar, all places with a large Hakka population. In 1893, he published a long article about the kongsi of Borneo, in which he supported De Groot's criticism of earlier Dutch policy towards the kongsi. He also did linguistic field work and collected materials about the Hakka dialects spoken in Sambas.

On 1 April 1896 he was, at his own request, allowed one year of leave to Europe because of long service. He went to live in The Hague and continued his research on the Hakka dialects. When he found that he could not finish his studies within his allotted leave, he requested an extension of three months. On 20 November 1896 he reported to the Minister of Colonies that he had studied with Schlegel in 1884–5, and, while stationed as 1st class Controller in Sambas, had collected notes about the Loeh Foeng (Lufeng 陸豐, Guangdong)²⁹⁹ dialect and other Hakka dialects from 1886 to 1896. He planned to work these up in order to make the results of his studies of these little known (and for the Indies important) dialects accessible for others. He added that Schlegel had urged him to do so since knowledge of these dialects was very important, in particular at the present time. However, because of circumstances and “necessary preliminary studies,” much time had been lost and he would not be able to finish this project during his leave. He therefore requested extension of his leave until 1 July 1897. At the same time, he asked to be given a copy of Schlegel's Dutch–Chinese dictionary from the national supply.

Department A¹ of the Ministry of Colonies³⁰⁰ also considered that the study of Chinese by an East Indies official could be very useful for the Colonies. And as to providing Schlegel's dictionary, it was noted that Schaank would be satisfied with the only copy still extant at the Ministry, although one instalment was missing. It could be given to him since it was of no use there in any event. But before a decision could be made, Schlegel should be consulted.³⁰¹

When so asked, Schlegel fully supported Schaank's request:

He made there [in Borneo] a thorough study of the Hakka dialects which have been studied so inadequately, and he recently showed his results to me.

In view of the Chinese in our archipelago who speak those dialects, who are not native-born Chinese (*peranakan*) and can only rarely express themselves in Malay, I consider it desirable that Mr. Schaank should be given an opportunity to elaborate his work; he should even be given the means for publishing it.

I trust that such a work would be highly welcome to the Officials for Chinese Affairs or the Chinese interpreters in the Indies.³⁰²

Approval was obtained in a Royal Decree, and Schaank was ordered to stay in Europe until 1 July 1897.³⁰³ The second part of his request, to obtain a copy of Schlegel's dictionary, was probably also met with.³⁰⁴ The result of

his research, *Het Loeh Foeng dialect (The Lufeng dialect)*, was published by Brill later that year.

This study begins with detailed phonological analyses with lists of initials (*ingangen*) and finals (*uitgangen*) of syllables, and tone tables with the seven tones of the Lufeng dialect, all with Chinese characters added. These are followed by lists of words (numerals, measure words, etc.), simple sentences and conversations, the latter two first arranged according to structure and later according to subject. The grammatical structure is not analysed, but is clearly shown by way of contrasting examples. Part of the sentences are taken from J. Dyer Ball, *Easy Sentences in the Hakka Dialect* (1881),³⁰⁵ but now with the addition of tone signs and of course in Lufeng pronunciation. There is a Dutch–Hakka vocabulary list with a list of loanwords from Malay. These chapters are printed in transcription only, without Chinese characters. Then there is an alphabetical character list according to initials, finals and tones. Finally there is a chapter about the phonological differences with other Hakka dialects, such as that of Kia Ying Tsiu. Strangely, Schaank was the first Dutch sinologist to mention and study the variations among the Hakka dialects.³⁰⁶

Undoubtedly Schaank's "necessary preliminary studies" refer to his pioneering work on Chinese phonology.³⁰⁷ This resulted in his reconstructions of ancient Chinese phonology based on ancient rhyme tables, which were published in *T'oung Pao* in 1897, 1898, and 1902.³⁰⁸ Schaank was not the first to delve into this subject; Edkins and Schlegel and others had also studied it, but he was the first to use a systematic, scientific method. Karlgren would later consider Schaank's studies a sound piece of work, although not without faults. He would often refer to it,³⁰⁹ while at the same time discarding Schlegel's writings as unscientific speculations.³¹⁰

Schlegel in the 1870s had already urged teaching Chinese to future East Indies officials.³¹¹ Schaank was the only such student who not only studied Chinese with him, but, ironically, afterwards was also the only Dutch sinologist to do linguistic fieldwork among the Chinese in the Indies,³¹² and to do fundamental linguistic research as well. The reason that he could do field work was presumably, apart from his linguistic talent and interest, that as a grass-roots official of the Interior Administration in Borneo, he was in constant contact with the Chinese, even more than the regular European interpreters for Chinese, who were often 'kept out' of Chinese affairs by the officials of Interior Administration.

Schlegel's last group of regular students left in 1895, but he continued to teach Chinese to extraordinary students. In his report to the University about 1895–6, he wrote that he had been teaching "Chinese spoken language and literature" for four hours per week to four students.³¹³ In September 1896 he was still teaching four students: J.H. Kann, two unnamed students of law, and "a young Austrian,"³¹⁴ Erwin von Zach.

Jacobus Henricus Kann (1872–1944) was a Jewish banker from The Hague,³¹⁵ who in September 1896 had already studied Chinese for pleasure (*uit liefhebberij*) with Schlegel for about a year. He registered as a student in the Faculty of Arts on 11 January 1896.³¹⁶ When Li Hongzhang visited the Netherlands in July 1896, Kann was received by him in a private meeting.³¹⁷ Kann seems not to have continued his Chinese studies. He had a career as a banker and became an active supporter of Zionism. He and most of his family died in German concentration camps.³¹⁸

Erwin Ritter von Zach (1872–1942) had, during his studies of medicine in Vienna in 1890–5, taken lessons in classical Chinese with Franz Kühnert³¹⁹ and modern Chinese with Carl Kainz,³²⁰ wishing to go to China and work as a medical doctor. In 1896, while recovering from appendicitis in Noordwijk, a coastal town near Leiden and a popular resort among Germans, he became acquainted with Schlegel, Kern, and other professors in Leiden.³²¹ Schlegel had a different version, saying Von Zach was “a young Austrian who came specially to Leiden to follow my classes, because he did not find any opportunity to thoroughly study Chinese in Austria, nor in Germany,”³²² and this was probably what Von Zach told him. Von Zach wrote later that on Schlegel’s advice, he had registered in the Faculty of Arts of Leiden University on 13 October 1896,³²³ and that he studied in Leiden for a full year.³²⁴ In his report to the University about 1896–7, Schlegel wrote that he taught eight hours per week to four students. Subjects were: “Chinese spoken language; exercises in translating Chinese books” and, probably for Von Zach, “Etymological studies of Manchu and Jürched (old Manchu).” Since the latter subject is difficult to combine with the former, and the languages of instruction were Dutch and German,³²⁵ he may have taught two courses, one of four hours to his former three students and Von Zach, and one of four hours to Von Zach only.

During this year Von Zach published, together with Schlegel, his first real article in *T’oung Pao*, containing a translation of an Imperial honorific decree; Schlegel translated the Chinese text and Von Zach the Manchu text.³²⁶ Von Zach would later work in the Chinese Maritime Customs Service from 1897 to 1901 and in the Austrian Consular Service from 1901 to 1919.³²⁷

Von Zach never showed any gratitude or appreciation for Schlegel; on the contrary, he started publishing his criticism and sarcastic comments on Schlegel’s translations as early as 1898–9.³²⁸ When Schlegel responded to the first of these, the editors published part of it, expressing their regret “that ... certain strictures by Mr. von Zach on Dr. Schlegel, were allowed to be inserted in their original form.” In his letter, Schlegel refuted many of Von Zach’s arguments, but his “personal references to Mr. von Zach” were suppressed “in the interest of all parties,” and the subject was closed.³²⁹ Therefore, Schlegel was not given an opportunity to explain

the reasons for their conflict. Three years later, Von Zach combined new points of criticism with virulent personal attacks in two pamphlets which he published himself in 1902, and which were Von Zach's first book publications.³³⁰ Among many other invectives, he accused him of dilettantism and being an "academic conjurer" (*wissenschaftlichen Gaukler*), and even "a pathological phenomenon" (*ein pathologisches Phänomen*) for his refusal to accept criticism.³³¹ Von Zach was a great sinologist and philologist, and Schlegel's translations were certainly not without faults, but Von Zach had exactly the same belief in his own infallibility of which he accused Schlegel. Not all of his comments on translations by others were justified. In his obituary, Alfred Forke recognised Von Zach's greatness as a sinologist, and his wittiness, but also wrote that he was an extremely sensitive and irritable personality. Von Zach's vehement attacks on Schlegel must also have been incited by Schlegel's own unreasonable behaviour. Von Zach seems to have used his whole arsenal of criticism and sarcasm to take revenge for this.

From 1897–1901, Schlegel did not teach any students. But in his report of 1901–2, he wrote that he taught "Chinese language and light literature" for four hours a week to two students. He mentioned no names, but one of them was the classicist M.W. de Visser. The curriculum included "Words and short sentences in the spoken language; translation (written) of fables." The language of instruction was Dutch. This report was written in another hand than Schlegel's, but it was crudely signed by him on 1 July 1902. The next week De Groot wrote in a letter to the University that he had taken over Schlegel's course for De Visser during the last month, since Schlegel had had to stop teaching because of sudden blindness.³³² De Groot then taught him for two years. De Visser would later consider De Groot his actual teacher. He rarely mentioned Schlegel and only characterised him as "a peculiar man."³³³

