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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 FIFTEEN

THE REFORM OF 1896

On W.P. Groeneveldt's initiative, a reorganisation took place in 1896 in an attempt to strengthen the sinologists' position as advisors; from now on they were called Officials for Chinese Affairs. Yet this reform came late in the day, and its effects were limited. Many interpreters had already taken up administrative and judicial tasks outside their formal appointments, which would ultimately clear the way to other careers. No less than one-third left the corps voluntarily.

Officials for Chinese Affairs

In 1894, fifteen years after the retrenchment of 1879, and after Schlegel had started training new groups of students, Groeneveldt again raised the same problems, namely the too large number of interpreters and their weak advisory position. If anyone, he, now Vice-President of the Council of the Indies, should be able to ameliorate the interpreters' position. His *nota* of 1894 and the subsequent discussions and measures are described in Chapter Nine in the section "The Reorganisation of the Interpreters' Corps and Another Moratorium."

Groeneveldt's proposal resulted in the reorganisation and retrenchment of 1896, providing for a total of five positions for Officials for Chinese Affairs. In the *Provisions for assigning posts and regulating the work of the Officials for Chinese Affairs* of 1896,¹ the advisory functions became the most prominent. Article I defined the hierarchical position of the Officials for Chinese Affairs: they fall under the Department of Justice and are subordinate to the Director of Justice, as before. Article II defined the posts and jurisdiction (*ressort*), including two posts on Java: one in Batavia (with jurisdiction in Padang, Western Borneo) and one in Surabaya (rest of Java, South Eastern Borneo), and three in the Outer Possessions: Tanjung Pinang (Riau, Banka, Palembang), Medan (East Coast of Sumatra, Atjeh), and Makassar (Sulawesi, Ambon, etc.). If the number of Officials were larger than five, the jurisdiction was to be rearranged. The advisory functions were now considerably extended: they were now entitled to offer advice on their own initiative and were to be consulted in all Chinese affairs.

- Article III. The Officials for Chinese Affairs directly advise the judicial and administrative authorities and boards within their jurisdiction in matters concerning the Chinese as often as required. They can independently submit proposals or expositions to these authorities and boards concerning such matters. If these have a general purport, they will be submitted to the Director of Justice, either directly or through the intervention of the head of the region where they are stationed.
- Article IV. The head of the region where an Official for Chinese Affairs is stationed consults him when deciding or proposing measures and handling matters involving in particular Chinese, or that are in particular important for the Chinese population in that region. ...²

Since the 1880s, there had been much criticism of the ill treatment of Chinese coolies in the Indies. A new function was now created for the Official for Chinese Affairs: a kind of Labour Inspector in places such as Medan and Banka.

- Article V. Where the opportunity exists, the head of regional government makes use of the services of the Official for Chinese Affairs to assure the proper functioning of regulations and provisions concerning Chinese labourers for and of agricultural or mining enterprises.³

There were also provisions on their secondary function of translating and interpreting, their function in the Orphans and Estate Chambers, the possibility of private emoluments, the right to have a Chinese clerk, and the text of their oath (affirmation).

Article XII entitled them to wear a special costume. In 1865, Buddingh had requested to be allowed to wear a distinctive costume, and he was supported in this by the Residency's Secretary Gijsbers. He considered such a costume necessary in order to be able to mix and practice his Chinese with full-blood Chinese (*sinkheh*), the majority of whom were of the lowest class.⁴ Buddingh, and certainly Gijsbers, knew about Governor-General Sloet's decision of 1863 that the interpreters of Javanese in Surakarta and Yogyakarta were allowed to wear a fancy costume and cocked hat, and even a sword.⁵ At that time, however, the Council of the Indies had advised against the need of a costume, arguing that it could lead to wrong impressions about their real position,⁶ since the interpreters were without any independent authority. Thirty years later, in 1896, the Officials for Chinese Affairs were finally allowed to wear a costume, though it was simpler than the one worn by the Javanese interpreters:

Article XII. When performing their daily services or undertaking official travels, the Officials for Chinese Affairs can wear the following distinctions:

- a. a coat of dark blue cloth with a row of golden buttons with the crowned letter W.
- b. a cap of the same cloth with a 4 cm wide gold braid.⁷

But in Groeneveldt's opinion, it would be impossible really to change the system. At the end of his *nota* of 1894, he summarised the sinologists' predicament in the Indies as follows:

The position of interpreter for Chinese or Official for Chinese Affairs will always have the unpleasant aspect that one does not have fixed responsibilities, but always has to wait until being involved by others in any matter; in this way one often sees that matters for which one feels interest, and believes that it would have been better if one could have dealt with, are decided without one's involvement; this brings about a feeling of dissatisfaction that many cannot overcome, and that will continue to induce them to search for another job.⁸

A comparison between the functions of the Dutch sinologists in the Indies and the British sinologists in the Straits Settlements is enlightening. In official correspondence until the 1900s, no references to the British system could be found, and Groeneveldt also did not mention it. Of course, the political situation in the British colonies was very different from that in the Indies, since the Chinese were ruled directly by the British and there was hardly any such system as Chinese Officers and Councils. From 1872 on, somewhat later than in the Indies, the first European translator for Chinese, Pickering, a self-made man, was appointed in the Straits Settlements. His main tasks were to translate in the courts, to check the Chinese interpreters, and to translate British law into Chinese. It is ironical that Pickering in the beginning proposed to use the Dutch system of rule over the Chinese and European interpreters.⁹ In 1877 Pickering was appointed as the first Protector of Chinese; he then acquired more administrative functions.¹⁰

Borel was perhaps the first to point out the differences with respect to the British system. Being stationed in Riau, from where he often visited Singapore, he was well acquainted with the situation there through his friend the Protector, G.T. Hare. He wrote in 1895:

The position of "Chinese Protector" and most other positions that the English sinologists have in the Straits Civil System, give them infinitely more opportunities to sympathise with the Chinese and to enlarge their knowledge of the language, customs and traditions every day, than the position of interpreters for Chinese in our colonies who receive such stepmotherly treatment.¹¹

The Protectors of Chinese also had to pass an examination in Straits Civil Law, making them eligible to act as magistrates, and although their salaries could never attain the maximum of f 800 possible for the Dutch interpreters, Borel believed the Dutch sinologists would take this lightly if they were given a more substantial occupation.

The English are busy all day long (but never as *jurubahasa* [interpreter]; for which Chinese are used), and work hard from 9 to 4, either as magistrate, or at the protectorate, or elsewhere, while the Dutch interpreters of Chinese, if they are not working for themselves—and that without the slightest official incentive—have virtually nothing to do, and will certainly sometimes wonder why, after the indeed splendid, generous training course given them, they always have to remain as good as unemployed, with now and then a small translation of an ordinance or a paragraph from the *Staatsblad*. There are some who don't speak Chinese for months, simply because they are not given the opportunity.¹²

Unfortunately, the reforms of 1896 in the Netherlands Indies did not help much. Indeed, just as Groeneveldt had predicted, they would prove to be merely cosmetic; the basic problem was not solved. Moreover, because of the large number of new incumbents, the reduction to five was only realised a decade later (*see* graph in Appendix H).

After a few years, it became clear that the reorganisation had not led to any fundamental change. In the 1900s, at the Director of Justice's request, several Officials for Chinese Affairs submitted proposals, often referring to the British system, to give them administrative responsibilities such as labour or immigration inspector, registrar at the Civil Registration (*burgerlijke stand*), etc.¹³ Although more sinologists were now charged with special tasks and assignments, there was no basic change until the establishment of the Bureau of Chinese Affairs in Batavia in 1916, when all sinologists were concentrated in one central advisory body.

Other administrative functions

Many interpreters who had not enough work to do fulfilled other functions in the regional government, in particular in the Outer Possessions. Albrecht wrote in his *nota* of 1878:

If the interpreter is not lacking in editorial skills and willing to cooperate, the Residents, who rarely have good editors at their disposal, in this respect sometimes make use of them, although the Government had not appointed them with the purpose of bolstering up the personnel of the regional offices.¹⁴

Some examples of other administrative functions in Banka, Pontianak, Cirebon, and Medan may be given here. In these places it was originally

expected that the interpreters could be useful. In the large towns on Java, it would probably not be as convenient to charge the interpreters temporarily with other functions, as it would in the more thinly staffed Outer Possessions. Special unsalaried functions often fulfilled by sinologists, such as member of the fire brigade, militia or school commission, are not mentioned here.

The places of stationing of interpreters, in chronological order of establishment, were: 1. Banka, 2. Pontianak (both 1860), 3. Batavia, 4. Surabaya (both 1862), 5. Riau (1864), 6. Semarang (1865), 7. Cirebon (1866), 8. Padang (1869), 9. Makassar (1878), 10. Medan (1879), 11. Rembang (1880).¹⁵

When Albrecht was stationed on Banka in 1860, he had even more reasons to take on other functions than the others. He had spent three and a half years studying the wrong dialect, Cantonese, and had studied Hokkien for one year only, so he could only *speak a little* with a small minority of the Chinese on Banka. Moreover, his Chinese teacher/clerk had refused to accompany him to Banka, and there is no evidence that a new clerk was assigned to him. In Mentok, he could only make himself useful, and allegedly even maintain his position, by accepting other administrative jobs:

The undersigned was stationed on Banka in 1860-1864; he was left there because he performed tasks in the Office of the Resident which strictly speaking should not have been required of him, but which he did with pleasure, since otherwise he would have felt very bored and he gladly wished to get informed about the situation on Banka and the administration in general. He had the satisfaction of being appointed twice as acting Residency Secretary under Resident Bossche, both times for a considerable period.¹⁶

When serving in these other functions, Albrecht was sometimes paid an extra salary. For instance, on 29 March 1863 he was accorded a remuneration of f 300 for temporary duty as Secretary and Magistrate as well as General Tax Receiver (*algemeene ontvanger van 's lands Kas*) and Auctioneer (*vendue meester*) in Mentok during more than two months.¹⁷ Other interpreters were also paid extra salaries for extraordinary jobs.

Albrecht probably had so little work experience as an interpreter and translator that when he was asked to contribute to the compilation of the interpreters' *Directive*, he seems to have been unable to do so.

Only one example is known where he put to practice his sinological knowledge, but this was of purely academic value: he made a description of twelve old Chinese coins.¹⁸

His successor Buddingh, who was appointed in 1864, tried hard to make himself useful as an interpreter, but he was not inclined to take on other jobs.¹⁹ Albrecht bluntly wrote about this situation:

His successor did not share his opinion; therefore it was more convenient to do without him and as a consequence the position in Mentok was abolished.²⁰

This was the first time that a statutory (*organiek*) position for an interpreter was officially abolished. It happened in 1869, and Buddingh was transferred to Padang,²¹ where probably more work was to be expected since there were a *Raad van Justitie* and Orphans Chamber. The next year, however, Buddingh passed away in Batavia, where his cousin Schlegel was living.²²

Eight years later, in 1878, when Groeneveldt was asked to find places of stationing for the new interpreters, he wrote that he did not know why this position in Mentok had been abolished, thinking that an interpreter on Banka would be most useful. On his advice, one of the three students, Stuart, was appointed in Mentok. Since Stuart had only studied Hokkien, he was allowed a special language teacher for learning a second dialect, probably Hakka. Nothing is known about his work on Banka, but after five years, in 1883, he exchanged positions with Van der Spek who was in Makassar. Only a few months later, Van der Spek was transferred to Padang. The next interpreter in Mentok was De Jongh, who was stationed there from 1887 to 1890. Groeneveldt, knowing him well, wrote about him:

The only interpreter who has done a lot of work on Banka is A.A. de Jongh, ... who concerned himself much with the tin mining, did a lot of administrative work, and acted as the Residency's Secretary several times. Again it depended upon the persons concerned: Resident Hooghwinkel knew how to profit from Mr. de Jongh and the latter was willing to make himself useful over and above his official position, two circumstances on which one cannot always count.²³

De Jongh would later follow H.F. Hooghwinkel to the Opium Monopoly and pursue another career.

The next incumbent, A.E. Moll, was stationed in Mentok from 1892 until 1894. He complained to Groeneveldt that he had absolutely nothing to do on Banka.²⁴ In 1894 he was transferred to Padang.

Ezerman was appointed in 1894 to his first post, succeeding Moll, and like Stuart he was allowed a second language teacher for learning Hakka. In 1895 he was charged with the administration of the tin mines for some time.²⁵ After two years in Mentok, in 1896, he was transferred to Riau.

The last two Officials for Chinese Affairs on Banka were Van de Stadt (1903–7) and De Bruin (1907–8). Van de Stadt was temporarily assigned to the Opium Monopoly (under De Jongh) in 1904, and in 1905 he was sent to China to try to recruit workers for Banka. He and De Bruin both left the corps for good after their stay on Banka, joining private companies.

It was expected that an interpreter would be extremely useful on Bor-

neo. In 1853, one of the arguments for needing European interpreters was the kongsi war on Borneo, where contracts and treaties between the Dutch and Chinese would have to be carefully translated. But in fact the interpreters had almost as little to do on Borneo as on Banka.

When Von Faber was stationed in Montrado, he also soon discovered that Cantonese was not understood on Borneo (nor was Hokkien). He therefore applied himself to learning the Hakka dialect and even compiled a Hakka textbook.²⁶ He also put his sinological knowledge to good use in compiling an article about Montrado, which may first have been a *nota* he had been charged to write for the local government.²⁷ He was at least able to help in compiling the interpreters' *Directive* of 1863.

In February 1862, after a year and a half of service, Von Faber went on two months' sick leave within the country. Although nothing is known about the reasons, one may guess that his whole situation must have been sickening to him. He proceeded to Pelantoengan in the hills near Semarang, Java, and his leave was later lengthened twice until July. One month later he was transferred to Batavia; afterwards he never returned to Borneo.

Two years after Von Faber had left Borneo, Groeneveldt was appointed there at his first post, where he stayed for six years. In retrospect, he gave the following account of his work in Pontianak:

I was stationed there for several years as interpreter of Chinese and did a lot of work, but mostly outside my original duties. I took care of the correspondence with Sarawak, since I knew better English than the other officials available to the Resident, and therefore in various ways took part in the handling of the Dayak question together with that country; I often assisted the Resident in editing larger documents and in his correspondence with the Government, but as an interpreter I did little. Still, I was in favourable circumstances, because out of a feeling of dissatisfaction I tried to exert as much influence as possible on all matters concerning the Chinese, and the Residents under whom I consecutively served, were very accommodating to me, probably because of the services that I rendered voluntarily; in that way I was more involved with Chinese matters than any of my predecessors or successors, but still I could not look back with satisfaction on what I did there as an interpreter.²⁸

Together with the Assistant Resident, C. Kater, he was lauded with the "special satisfaction of the Government" after he helped pacify a conflict among Dayak tribes in Sambas and Sarawak in 1865.²⁹

His successor Meeter served in Pontianak in 1870–4 after his return from sick leave in the Netherlands. He usually had troubled relations with his superiors and was only willing to perform services that were explicitly prescribed by law, and even then sometimes reluctantly. Some examples of his work as interpreter and advisor on Borneo, and how he managed to avoid other work, have already been given. In his later reminiscences he more than once acknowledged that he was not suitable for the work

of a government official. It is no wonder that he designated himself in his “Indische Chinoiserieën” as Prosantes, meaning ‘steep, troublesome, recalcitrant,’ probably a translation of *opponent*, an epithet used for him by some people.³⁰

Nothing is known about Roelofs’ (1875–6) work in Pontianak, his first post. His successor Young (1877–9) obtained the favour of Resident Kater by helping him with other work outside of his tasks as interpreter, just as Groeneveldt had done.³¹

De Groot served in Pontianak in 1879–83, his second post. In his first post, Cirebon, he had already decided to leave the corps as soon as possible. Pontianak was a much more attractive position, where he traveled a lot accompanying the Resident, and had a lot of work to do, as had Groeneveldt and Young. He also had a special relation with the Resident C. Kater.³² In his Diary he wrote about his extraordinary work in Pontianak:

The English correspondence with the Raja of Sarawak, assigned to me by Resident Kater, is carried on by me with interest, since from the secret archives to which I have access, I get to read a lot of interesting things about the true relation of Sarawak to the British Crown and of the Crown to the Netherlands with respect to that region. It seems no *controleur* or Assistant Resident whosoever in this region is proficient enough in English to take care of that correspondence, which does not speak well for the results of language teaching at the HBS, of which all *controleurs* passed the final examination. Kater himself is also unable to write one line in English without mistakes, and he therefore is highly dependent upon me for decently managing these often extremely difficult political matters; strictly speaking I am entitled to refuse to do that work, since it does not belong to my official duties. As a consequence, he, although infamous with everyone for the rude, tactless, bad and in general unfair treatment his officials have to endure from him, conspicuously spares me. Perhaps this is also because he would be glad to see me propose marriage to his second daughter; but I will not marry a Eurasian, I have come to know that race too well for that. ... Pontianak would almost be able to reconcile me with my position; but the intention to get out is too unshakably fixed in my mind to give up.³³

Despite the incomparably better circumstances, De Groot suffered in 1883 from neurasthenia, palpitations and headaches (according to the doctor a result of his studies at night), and obtained two years of sick leave to the Netherlands.³⁴

He was succeeded in Pontianak by A.E. Moll. The latter had the previous year been transferred from Java to Singkawang as a punishment for writing newspaper articles “against the regional government in Cirebon.” During his stationing, the troubles took place when the last *kongsi*, the Lanfang kongsi, was abolished.³⁵ In 1887, after four years in Pontianak, Moll was succeeded by Young who had been in Pontianak before. Young was transferred to Borneo for a special reason. On Borneo an alleged ‘missionary’ of a Chinese secret society from Singapore had been apprehended.

The government was always wary of the Chinese secret societies, which were thought to be subversive, and in particular of their international contacts, although De Groot had denied this danger in his *Kongsiwezen*. Since Moll at the time happened to be in Batavia and had also been allowed two months of sick leave, Young, who had been stationed there before and knew Hakka, therefore switched places with Moll. Two weeks after his arrival in Pontianak, Young was sent on a secret mission to Singapore to investigate the matter: once again, an interpreter made himself useful as a troubleshooter. As a result of his investigation, both Chinese officers were dismissed and a new bylaw was promulgated in Western Borneo and other places for the suppression of secret societies. At the request of Resident A.H. Gijsberts, Young remained in Pontianak for another two years, after which he had to go on sick leave to Europe.

Young was succeeded by Stuart, who served in Pontianak in 1889–92. For the next two years there was no interpreter on Borneo. In 1894, when Resident S.W. Tromp received the news that Van Wettum, coming from China, had been appointed, he wrote to Governor-General Van der Wijck that there was little need for an interpreter. This had become clear during the preceding two years, when there was no interpreter of Chinese, and his absence had not been felt.³⁶ Nevertheless, Van Wettum served in Pontianak from 1894 until 1898. In December 1896, he married Tromp's seventeen-year-old daughter Anne Maria. His only known special function was that in 1898 he served as extraordinary substitute clerk (*buitengewoon substituut griffier*) at the *Landraad* in Pontianak. In 1898 Van Wettum was succeeded by Thijssen, who came from China and was Official for Chinese Affairs in Pontianak until 1904. Later incumbents were De Bruin (1904–5), Borel (1908–9), again Thijssen (1910–1), and still later De Groot's students H. Mouw (1912–4) and J. Snellen van Vollenhoven (1914–6). In the end, Pontianak was one of the few places where almost always an interpreter or Official for Chinese Affairs was stationed.

In Cirebon on Java only three interpreters were ever stationed, but none of them could make himself useful in his field of study. In 1866 De Breuk was appointed there, although it was a Hokkien town and he had only studied Hakka. Groeneveldt wrote in 1878 about this post and De Breuk's work:

Cirebon has according to the *Government Almanac* a Chinese population of 15,803, and is therefore in this respect the second Residency on Java. I think the population is rather "native," so translations are rarely required, but although Malay is generally known, the Chinese population remains a special element, and for handling their affairs a Chinese interpreter can be a useful assistant. In the past that need was not felt and the functions of the interpreter stationed there were mainly restricted to the agency of the Batavian Orphans and Estate Chambers, checking the warehouses and other inferior work, for which provision could be made in a cheaper way.³⁷

Four years after his appointment, De Breuk passed away in Cirebon, only 26 years old.

When Groeneveldt was asked to select places of stationing for Schlegel's three students in 1878, he suggested Cirebon, saying "one could now try and see if the present Resident has another opinion."³⁸ Thereupon De Groot was stationed there for two years. He was extremely disappointed and unhappy there—even more so than he had been in Delft and Leiden—and had nothing to do officially.

The reality concerning the position of interpreter is a great disillusionment. All the brilliant prospects Schlegel held out to us have proved to be *humbug*, and unfounded; actually I have been hoodwinked. Officially I have almost nothing to do.³⁹

But he did have good relations with the Resident P.F. Wegener, to whom he would feel grateful all his life, and to some others. He devoted his time to his studies, but also decided to leave the interpreter corps as soon as possible.

In 1880, De Groot was succeeded by A.E. Moll, who became extraordinary substitute clerk (*buitengewoon substituut griffier*) at the *Landraad* in Cirebon on 17 January 1881.⁴⁰ After anonymously writing critical articles about the new Resident J. Faes and Secretary Coert, in November 1882 he was demoted to a faraway post on Borneo.⁴¹ He was the last incumbent in Cirebon.

In 1879, after many discussions among government officials, it was decided to appoint an interpreter in Medan, and Hoetink was transferred from Makassar to Medan. This town had since 1869 been developed by private companies, and the East Coast of Sumatra had only in 1873 become an administrative entity; previously it had been part of Riau Residency. But even here, where the need of an interpreter seemed great, Hoetink used most of his time to do notarial and other administrative work.⁴² Of course, he had the disadvantage of not being able to speak the most common dialects there, Hakka and Hoklo. He applied for a second teacher to learn another dialect in 1881. Still, he could make himself useful and stayed there for ten years. From 8 March 1885 to 1887 he was a member of the Residential Court (*Residentieraad*), and from 1 July 1887 to 1889 of the *Landraad* in Medan. He was also secretary of the *Immigranten-Asyl*,⁴³ where sick or disabled Chinese were cared for. Deli's Resident Scherer highly appreciated his services, praising his competence, character, local knowledge and tact.⁴⁴ But in 1895, when Hoetink suddenly resigned as interpreter in Batavia, one of the editors of the *Deli-Courant*, J. Deen, wrote from the Netherlands that Hoetink

whose competence was recognised by friend and foe alike, was never given an opportunity to show his real talents. He has to waste his time on translation

work that was done by a Chinese clerk, or in the most favourable case as a Resident's "handy man," while serious efforts on his part to obtain a more active government official's life were not lacking.⁴⁵

Deen understood well why Hoetink had resigned: "Now he can better his position financially and he is moreover liberated from the most stultifying job I know." The immediate reason for Hoetink's resignation is not known,⁴⁶ but two months later he was surprisingly reappointed as interpreter in Batavia.

After Hoetink, Schaalje was stationed in Medan in 1890–6. He also was secretary of the *Immigranten-Asyl*. Just before the reorganisation of the interpreter corps in 1896, when Resident of Deli P.J. Kooreman was asked if he wished to keep Schaalje in function though the latter was already entitled to a pension, he answered that he did not in the least wish to retain him.⁴⁷ The last incumbent in Medan was De Bruin, from 1898 to 1904. He acted as interpreter for J.L.T. Rhemrev in 1903. In 1912 the position in Medan was abolished.⁴⁸

Considering all the foregoing, it is no wonder that Groeneveldt advised one beginning interpreter to try to find another job, just as he had done himself. Already in 1880 he urged the newly arrived Van der Spek in a personal conversation to look out for other opportunities, and the Government Secretary Pannekoek made the same suggestion to De Jongh.⁴⁹ Both would take this advice to heart.

In his *nota* of 1894 Groeneveldt quoted Minister of Colonies Sprenger van Eijk's statement that the interpreters were men of excellent intellectual capacities, diligent and perseverant, who could be very useful in other functions. He suggested that they should not be required to pass the Higher Officials Examination, and were entitled to high aspirations:

The interpreters of Chinese are too excellent for the job of clerk at a Residency Office and are, once they have proven their suitability, certainly entitled to an opportunity to spread their wings wider than the work of Regional Secretary.⁵⁰

On Java from the 1890s on, some interpreters were assigned to other government agencies, but these assignments were all connected with their special knowledge and experience. In Batavia, one of the two interpreters (Officials for Chinese Affairs) was almost continuously given another function. From 1893 onwards, De Jongh worked with the Opium Monopoly or its predecessor, and in 1898 he left Chinese Affairs. Hoetink was from 1900 until 1903 assigned to the Department of Justice, and was sent on inspection tours to the Chinese mining districts. In 1904 he left Chinese Affairs and became the first Inspector of Labour. Van Wettum was assigned to the Department of Justice from 1908 until his death in 1914. In Surabaya, from 1905 until 1909 Thijssen was assigned, each time for a few

months, to the Opium Monopoly (under De Jongh) and to the Department of Education, Religious Affairs and Industry; he was also charged three times to accompany remigrating coolies from Banka to China.

Not much is known about other administrative functions fulfilled by the sinologists elsewhere, and these places are therefore not discussed here. In any case, a number of interpreters would, thanks to their other functions, get a useful schooling for pursuing other careers. These other careers, and attempts at other careers, will be analysed in the next section.

Leaving the interpreter corps

From the start it was clear that the interpreters had not enough work to do, and that their job was at times almost a sinecure. As Groeneveldt stated in 1894, the main problem was that the sinologists did not have fixed responsibilities (*geen vasten kring van bemoeienis*).⁵¹ However, many interpreters were willing to take on other administrative tasks, and some devoted their free time to studies. In this way, whether or not deliberately, they prepared themselves for a subsequent change of career.

The position of interpreter also offered—apart from transfer from the Outer Possessions to Java and finally to Batavia—no career perspectives. They would always remain interpreters, and their highest salary would not exceed f 800, while other officials in the Interior Administration could climb to f 1,000 or more. In the small and narrow-minded Indies society, these were important matters. The interpreters were not highly respected by the general public, which was one of the causes of the lack of candidates for the interpreter training course in Batavia in the 1860s and 1870s.

More than one-third (nine) of the 24 interpreters/Officials for Chinese Affairs trained before 1900 took up a different career after some years of service—at least five years in order to avoid having to refund all study and other allowances. For them, studying Chinese and acting as an interpreter became a stepping stone to another, more brilliant career. Being intelligent and ambitious men, many of them were quite successful in their later life. Here the career shifts of these sinologists, and the failed attempts of some, will be summarily recounted to give an overall picture. More details about each sinologist can be found in the biographies and other sections of the main text (as indicated).⁵²

The first to leave was Schlegel, when on 8 June 1872 he was granted two years of sick leave to the Netherlands after ten years of service in Batavia. When he officially began studying Chinese, it had already been noted that he could become Hoffmann's successor. In addition to his illness (diabetes), he may also have been unhappy in his position—although he would always describe it to his students as a glorious career. The deaths of his fel-

low student Francken (1864), his cousin Buddingh (1870), and De Breuk (1870) may also have contributed to his wish to get out.

Within a year after his return to Leiden, after Stanislas Julien's death the opportunity seemed right to propose a training course for interpreters in Leiden, for which he recommended himself as professor of Chinese at the University. One of the arguments was his record of publications during his ten years of service in Batavia. At first, in 1873, he was only charged with training interpreters, but in 1875, after a second request, he was made titular professor, and after a third in 1877 he was appointed Professor of Chinese, holding a chair specially created for him. At that moment he stopped being "interpreter of Chinese on leave" and his career in the Indies ended. This process has been described in detail in Chapter Eight. He kept that position until his death in 1903.

It is typical of the unenviable position of the interpreters that two students from Schlegel's first group, De Groot and Hoetink, after they had found out the true nature of their position in the Indies, sarcastically claimed Schlegel had only created this professorship for himself in order to avoid having to return to the Indies and work as an 'interpreter' again.

The second to leave was Groeneveldt on 7 August 1877, after 13 years of service. He had always been eager to fulfil other government functions in his previous places of stationing. In 1872–4 he had been secretary-interpreter of the first Dutch diplomatic representative in China, J. H. Ferguson, and upon his return to the Indies he was stationed in Batavia. He was an extremely intelligent and at the same time modest man, with a deep insight into human nature. Without having passed the Higher Officials Examination, he was appointed to the central government as Referendary at the Department of Education, Religious Affairs and Industry. He was at the same time made an Honorary Advisor for Chinese Affairs, whose opinion would be often asked. In that capacity, and backed by his high position, he did a lot to help his former colleagues (albeit according to Meeter not enough). His career advancement in the administration was swift and impressive: in 1881 he became Secretary of the same Department, in 1887 Director, in 1889 member of the Council of the Indies and in 1893 Vice-President, until his retirement in 1895. Later many expected that he would become the next Governor-General, as successor to Van der Wijck, but in 1899 W. Rooseboom was appointed instead,⁵³ probably because of Groeneveldt's problematic health.

The third to leave the corps was Albrecht on 27 August 1879, after 19 years of service. He had also always been interested in doing other jobs in the government in Mentok. He had specialised in the operations of the Orphans and Estate Chamber in Surabaya, and he had compiled indexes to the *Staatsblad van Ned.-Indië* and *Bijblad*. In these ways he had prepared himself well for the function of President of the Orphans Chamber in Ba-

tavia, which he fulfilled for six years. But in 1885, he suddenly went on sick leave to the Netherlands, two years later he retired, and in 1890 he passed away. He had been a well-respected and loved person who contributed in many ways to society.

By the time Albrecht left the corps, there was a surplus of interpreters, and it had become almost 'normal' for interpreters to switch careers. When the new interpreters Van der Spek and De Jongh arrived from China in 1880, both were advised to look out for an opportunity for another career.

The fourth to leave was De Groot on 7 March 1883, when he was granted sick leave to the Netherlands five years after finishing his studies. It is remarkable that from then on, several interpreters requested sick leave five years after graduation—when they were no longer obliged to repay the government in case of discharge. In his first post in Cirebon, De Groot had already made up his mind to leave as soon as possible and devote his life to scholarship. In his second post, Pontianak, he maintained this resolve despite slightly better conditions. During his service in the Indies, he already published several important scholarly works. Two years after his return to the Netherlands, at his own request he was granted a two-year study mission to China, which was later extended to four years. Subsequently he was granted two years of unpaid leave to the Netherlands, but already in January 1890 he was appointed as teacher of Malay and Chinese in Amsterdam, and a year later, in 1891, as Professor of Ethnology in Leiden. On 11 February 1892, he officially left the interpreters' corps, but continued giving advice to the government. In January 1904 he succeeded Schlegel as professor of Chinese in Leiden, and in 1912–21 he was professor at the Friedrich Wilhelms Universität in Berlin.

The fifth to leave was Van der Spek, who exactly five years after finishing his studies left the Indies, and was granted two years of sick leave to the Netherlands on 13 March 1885. He had already been preparing for another career by studying medicine in his free time. The direct cause of this leave was doubtless the failed interpreting session at the *Raad van Justitie* in Padang, after which he was heavily criticised in the newspapers. Soon after his arrival in the Netherlands, he registered as a student of medicine in Amsterdam in September 1885, and left government service on 3 August 1887. After finishing his studies in Amsterdam, he studied at several German universities and obtained his doctorate in Berlin in 1891. Finally, he set up as a dermatologist in Amsterdam, and published several medical articles. He passed away in 1902. He was the only interpreter who went on to pursue a completely different career.

In the 1890s there were two new developments that created other career perspectives. Three interpreters passed the Higher Officials Examination. De Jongh passed in Batavia in May 1892, Hoetink in May 1893, and Stuart in The Hague in July 1894. Stuart explained beforehand that his motivation

was not to start another career, but that he just wished to obtain a diploma. His two colleagues, however, would leave the corps some years later. During the discussions about the function of the sinologists, Groeneveldt suggested in 1894 to exempt the interpreters from the Higher Officials Examination if they applied for another government position—as had happened in his own case—but this suggestion was rejected by half of the members of the Council of the Indies and by Minister of Colonies Bergsma.

Another development was that positions in the Consular Service were several times tentatively offered to sinologists, or requested by them. In 1892, after the sudden sick leave of Consul-General P.S. Hamel, the Deli Planters Committee suggested appointing Hoetink as Consul in Amoy, and the Indies government seems to have agreed,⁵⁴ but no successor to Hamel was appointed. When two years later the position of Consul in Jeddah became vacant, which in view of the numerous Muslim pilgrims from the Indies was preferably to be fulfilled by an Indies official, it was suggested that Hoetink would be the right person, but a retired military officer, F.J. Haver Droeze, was appointed in his stead. The same year, Hoetink showed interest in the newly created position of Consul-General in Hong Kong, but again Haver Droeze was appointed instead of him.⁵⁵ In the summer of that year, Hoetink left the interpreters' service, probably to take up another job, but two months later he returned again.

When on 26 August 1896 Governor-General Van der Wijck decided on the new function of Official for Chinese Affairs, and reduced the desired number of those officials to five, on the same day he informed Minister of Foreign Affairs Röell that Hoetink and Stuart, who had both passed the Higher Officials Examination, might be suitable and available for an appointment as Consul in China or Singapore. After this proposal was seconded by Minister of Colonies Bergsma, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs replied that it did not need anyone at that time. But the following year the same Ministry requested information about Stuart and Hoetink in view of the new consulate to be established in Shanghai. Van der Wijck replied via Bergsma that Hoetink would be suitable and available, but Stuart was not suitable since he was married to a Eurasian lady; he was also not willing. Since in the meantime E.D. van Walree had already been appointed in Shanghai, this opportunity again did not materialise.

Borel applied on his own initiative from Makassar for a position as Consular Agent or interpreter in China on 15 April 1897. At first he received the same reply as the Governor-General had given in the case of Hoetink and Stuart, and later the Ministry of Foreign Affairs also asked information about him. Minister of Colonies Cremer replied that Borel was a fine sinologist, but also mentioned the government's dissatisfaction with him in 1895. In any case, his application was not granted, since the position in Shanghai was already taken.

More than a decade later there would be two cases of (candidate) Officials for Chinese Affairs switching to the newly created position of interpreter for the Foreign Service:⁵⁶ in 1910 C.G. Riem, after being trained in Leiden for the Indies, was sent to Peking instead to become a student-interpreter at the Dutch Legation, and in 1910–6 Th.H.J. de Josselin de Jong was first trained in Leiden for the Foreign Service, then sent to South China to learn the Hokkien, Swatow and Hakka dialects, subsequently appointed in Batavia, but one year later sent to Peking to become student-interpreter of Mandarin there.⁵⁷

On 27 June 1899, almost five years after finishing his studies, Borel was granted sick leave to the Netherlands, but he was actually planning to leave the corps. For more than four years he tried to make a living from his writings, mainly his novels, but he was not successful and returned to the Indies in November 1903.

The sixth to leave the interpreter corps was De Jongh, who on 21 July 1892 was temporarily assigned to Groeneveldt for preparing the experiment of an Opium Monopoly (*opium regie*). He had made himself useful by doing other work in Mentok under Resident H.F. Hooghwinkel, and in 1890 he had accompanied Groeneveldt as his secretary on a mission to French Indo-China to study the operation of the French Opium Monopoly system. The Indies system of opium tax-farming by Chinese Officers was a source of fraud, smuggling and corruption, and this mission was undertaken with a view to replacing it with another system, and gradually to reducing opium consumption. After the mission, De Jongh was transferred as Official for Chinese Affairs from Mentok to Batavia in 1890.

When Groeneveldt was made Vice-President of the Council of the Indies in 1893, De Jongh was on 11 August of that year assigned to the first Inspector of the Opium Monopoly, H.F. Hooghwinkel, who happened to be his former superior in Mentok. In 1894–1904, the Government Opium Monopoly was gradually introduced on Java. On 18 February 1898, De Jongh became Inspector, receiving f1,000 per month, thereby ceasing to be an Official for Chinese Affairs, and two months later he became acting chief, replacing Hooghwinkel who went on leave. Three years later, on 25 September 1901, he succeeded Hooghwinkel as Chief, a position he kept for ten years until his retirement on 7 August 1911. In this function he represented the Netherlands at the Opium Conference in Shanghai (1909), and as former chief at the first Conference in The Hague (1912). These conferences led to world-wide gradual regulation and prohibition of opium. After his retirement De Jongh still had the energy to serve as mayor of Hoorn (1913–21).

The seventh to leave was Hoetink, when on 24 July 1904 he became temporary Inspector of Labour after 26 years of service. He had not only passed the Higher Officials Examination but was also experienced in this

field, having twice arranged the emigration of coolies from China, and had been sent on inspection tours of mines and plantations in 1900–3. He fulfilled this function for only two years, but laid the foundation for the future Labour Inspection that was to exist from 1908 on.

In 1905 another opportunity appeared for a second career in combination with that of Official for Chinese Affairs. After the devastating defeat of Russia in the Russo–Japanese War of 1904–5, two sinologists who happened to be on leave in the Netherlands, Van Wettum and Ezerman, were charged to study Japanese in Berlin (theory) and later in Japan (practice) in order to become advisors for Japanese affairs. Both went to Berlin for one year, and Van Wettum also studied and worked in Japan for two years, while Ezerman stayed in the Netherlands, probably because of bad health. Afterwards, in 1908, Van Wettum was made concurrently Advisor for Japanese Affairs and Official for Chinese Affairs in Batavia.

The eighth to leave was Van de Stadt, who left on 5 May 1907 after nine years of service and became general agent of the Billiton Maatschappij.⁵⁸ He already had experience in promoting coolie emigration and was now charged with all matters concerning the Chinese, in particular the promotion of emigration.⁵⁹ His first task in 1907 was the recruitment of coolies directly from China instead of via Singapore, which he accomplished with great success in 1908.⁶⁰ In 1916 he was promoted to the position of Representative (*Vertegenwoordiger*) (of the home company in the Netherlands) in Batavia. In 1918, when the Head Administrator (*hoofdadministrateur*) P.J. Stigter, with whom he had worked together in 1906, was discharged because of budget reporting problems, Van de Stadt also took leave, disagreeing with the company's treatment of Stigter. He had already been studying Japanese for some time and now applied for the newly created scholarship for Indies officials to study Japanese in Japan, which was granted. After two years of study in Japan and another year in the Netherlands, in 1921 he was appointed Advisor for Japanese Affairs, functioning in 1922–32 as head of the Bureau for Japanese Affairs. During his second and third careers, he published three dictionaries.

The ninth to leave was De Bruin, after ten years of service, on 2 February 1908, to become Advisor for Chinese Affairs with the Deli-Maatschappij.⁶¹ He had been stationed in Deli from 1898 to 1904. He worked for the Deli-Maatschappij from 1908 until the end of 1915, for a salary of f1,250 per month. Then he resigned in order to apply for the professorship in Leiden. Later he was archivist of the East Coast of Sumatra Institute in Amsterdam for one year (1917–8), and finally he returned to the Indies to work for the Indies Tax Office from 1920 until 1931.

After De Groot had left Leiden for Berlin in 1912, two Indies sinologists applied for the position of professor in Leiden. De Bruin had been advised to apply by the diplomat W.J. Oudendijk when he acted as his

interpreter in Deli in 1913. Probably with this in mind, he published a series of textbooks entitled *Introduction to Modern Chinese* (1914–7) and also studied Mandarin for half a year in Peking (1916). To his great disappointment, in 1917 the unknown J.J.L. Duyvendak was appointed instead of him (as from 1919).

Borel also made several attempts to obtain this position during his sick leave in the Netherlands in 1913–5 and afterwards, based on his translations of Chinese classics and popular sinological studies. He was also extremely disappointed when he was not chosen.

Six of these nine sinologists who managed to begin another career reached high positions: Schlegel and De Groot reached the summits of scholarship; Groeneveldt, Albrecht, De Jongh, and Hoetink went to the heights in administration. But Van de Stadt and De Bruin also had remarkable careers with private companies and in related fields, and Van der Spek was successful in medicine. No wonder that in 1911, when De Groot complained about his colleagues' leaving the interpreter corps, Secretary General of Colonies J.B. van der Houven van Dordt wrote in the margin: "In the meantime most of them ended up doing fine."⁶²