

Toh Kee Chua: So what is Toh Kee Chua really like?

(file date: 26-1-2010 17:43)

Narrator: Andy

Players: Toh (in shorts), Rienk, Maxime, Alisa, Thomas, Tjaart, Manolis, Danielis, Kate, Luuk, Rudi, Sandrine, Kinga

Accessories: Chinese hat, badminton racket?

Toh enters Rienk's office (with a newspaper Chinese hat on)

Toh: Hello professor, I'm looking for a PhD position. I have some big plans here. I just finished my Master's in Germany, but that country is boring and all people are unhappy. Not like Holland, everybody seems relaxed and strangely smiling on the streets!! And I really care about ULTRAFAST processes! I have 13-14-15 cups of badminton and run ultrafast!

Toh is doing some ninja moves

Rienk: Uh hello, Keechua, good to see some enthusiastic ULTRAFAST people around! This is what we need for our state-of-the-art setups!

Toh: great! It looks really great all these setups full of lenses! I LOV it! I love lenses and light effects!

Rienk: I will introduce you to your supervisor... John?? John, where are you? Oh, I see that John is ill today, and will take the rest of the week off. But anyway, you can see the lab yourself, and start doing something there... keep yourself busy! I have to go now....

Toh: Hm, interesting... I like this place... only the food is a bit strange.

Group Meeting:

Toh (*enthusiastic*): Hello colleagues, as you know, I do ultrafast experiments, on LOV proteins! This dark state of APPA here is peaking at 460nm, but if you switch to the light state, it shifts to 470nm!!!!
I want to understand why this is happening, and this will be my thesis that will be finished in four years! By 2009 I will have five papers in good journals. In 2010 I will be a postdoc in a good lab, doing more research on ultrafast proteins. By 2012 I will have won a world famous scientific grant! By 2015 I will have set-up my own ultrafast lab - professor Toh's lab! You should all know that enthusiastic people make the difference!

Narrator: While doing research on photoactive proteins, Toh was concentrating on the photos, and on being ultra-active!

Toh: Guys, we need to work on the group spirit. Let's organize a picnic, and use the lab meeting room for a slide show of holidays and artistic pictures.....just to share our experience on a more personal, spiritual point of view...

Narrator: But this had little success

Toh: And hey guys, I need a personal photo of each one of you for the new brilliant staff page of our group which I'm designing with great care!

At the BMI

Toh (*cautiously and painstakingly tweaking a couple of mirrors and lenses*): Hey Maxime, this BMI is completely misaligned.

Maxime: What do you mean? I measured two weeks ago and everything was pretty okay.

Toh: No no! You don't understand. The beam should go exactly in the center of the mirror, so this lens is not good – can't you see?

Maxime: How many picometers more do you want to move the lens?

Toh: I think the only way to get it right is to remove all the optics and put it back again piece by piece.

Maxime: I love your relaxed way but Toh do you think it's really necessary to spend a week to disassemble and reassemble every single lens, mirrors and crystal to end up with the old same setup?

Toh: Just to be sure to get the best out of this old machine!

Maxime: Maybe you just need some time to get familiar with the setup. I will leave you to play with the machines. I anyway need to prepare 50 more slides for my talk on Wednesday.

Narrator: One week later

Maxime: So, how's it going? Did you find the magic signal?

Toh: Yes, it should be perfect now. Let's start some real measurements.

Toh clicks on the computer and he and Maxime wait for a few seconds.

Toh: Huh, wait, what's going on here?

Maxime: I told you before, sometimes this old machine just goes nuts

Toh: No, I think we lost the overlap. I better check the mirrors again.
(*Toh starts to tweak the mirrors again*) We need stay optimistic!

Maxime watches patiently at first, then starts to wander around in the lab

Narrator: 30 minutes later

Maxime: He Toh! I don't want to bother too much. I will check few emails, have a coffee and cigarettes!

Toh: go my friend! This has to be carefully checked with respect and care! Cautiousness and good spirit are my excellent qualities!

Narrator: 1 hour later

Toh: I think it's now perfect enough to reveal the secrets of the LOV domain from the femtosecond world.

Maxime: Well, let's see what happens this time. By the way, are you going to that photoreceptors meeting near Napels?

Toh: Yes, I booked a single flight.

Maxime: What do you mean? You aren't coming back?

Toh: No, I'm taking my mountain bike, fully equipped with an altitude meter, speedometer, water bottles, food, a tent and all other camping accessories.

Maxime: You mean you're gonna bike back from Southern Italy to Amsterdam???

Toh: Oh Yes!! I want to experience nature and feel the extremes in my muscles. I made all the calculations: if I bike 200 km per day, I will be back in less than 12.4 days!

Maxime: Toh, I think you did a great job with this setup! I'll help you one day with your data on this huge amount of crazy mutants but what about dinner? Well I'm gonna make my very, exceptionally and particularly good chocolate cake.

Toh: Oh thanks but another time!

Maxime: but Stephane is a great cook! She's a woman and she is French!.....

Luuk: Hey Toh! Do you really want to go all the way from Italy to Amsterdam! You'll become more Dutch than a Dutch after that! Dutch just watch the tour de France. They never bike further than to the next village!

Toh: Yes, you see I realized here that biking is really good to keep in shape and it's the best way to enjoy the landscape! If some people go around France by bike I can do it!

Rudi: Well looking at your legs it looks like it's gonna be easy for you. I love biking too but you see, I only do it in Italy!

Narrator: Toh is back from his trip.

Luuk: How was it? You've got a heavy sunburn!

Toh: it was very nice especially in the beginning! Italy is beautiful with great mountains. Well, it went a bit difficult to go over the Mont Blanc but I found a track through it!

After unfortunately in Germany I did not find a good trail and I had to take the highway...but nothing compared to those crazy Italians drivers!

Luuk: Well Toh, you're amazing! What about a bike trip around Norway?

Toh: Great! I'd love to go with you there! I hope it's more wild nature!

Luuk: but maybe it will be better to change your tires because to go to the VU it's maybe fine but they look really worn out!

Sandrine: Hey Toh I'm so glad you're back! Let's celebrate! What about a dinner at my place? Anyway I want to thank you for this nice DVD about China you offer me! As impressive as this movie we've seen together about Chinese industry.

Toh: Well, I'd love to invite you for dinner at my place!

Narrator: At the hospitium:

Kinga, Alisa, Sandrine are there in the little cosy Hospitium room.

Kinga: Toh , it's a delicious dinner that you cooked for us all.

Sandrine: Yes, you're just amazing! It's the first time I eat a real life-size crab and this special sea salad soup! Not easy but you're doing a great job with that hammer, except for getting some crab's juice in my eye!

Boat trip:

Kate: Hey people! Cool I bought a boat! I'm so happy about it! The little problem is that I need to bring it back from Utrecht!

Toh: Ho! No problem! We could bring it together back by rowing!

Kate (*on her one*): When there is some athletic task to be done, having Toh on the team is the best way to get it accomplished.

Narrator: despite blisters on his hands and a lot of a long hours, they made it!

Kate: Toh! You're my rowing champion

Sandrine: Toh, do you want to join me on a rowing course? It's organized by the VU.

Toh: well why not! I can see how good the Dutch teams are.

Kate: By the way Toh, I had a look at your homepage and was really impressed by your nice collection of photos and personal viewpoint on different matters.

Toh: Oh yes, this reminds me, it's time to take a new group photos. The previous one is already 3 years old! I bought a new camera last week and I should give it a test.

Trip to the Alps

Toh: Come on, losers, wake up!!
You slept already for 8 hours! And yesterday we barely made the 3100 meters peak! I want the real thing... Matterhorn is waiting for me!!!

Manolis: Relax, Toh... we are on vacation here. Don't need to go everywhere at the same time you know... and look at the fog - you can see really nothing of Matterhorn.

Toh: I know it is there! It is a bunch of stones, stones don't move! I am so tired of you! I came here to enjoy nature... to experience the extremes of the wild! I am a child of the nature. A real Chinese! I cannot stand looking at your slow pace (to Alisa), and waiting for you to stop at each and every hut! I am going! You lack dedication, meaning, purpose and commitment! I don't want to even associate myself with you.

Manolis: Don't you dare to go without us! We started as a team and we'll finish as a team!

Toh: Just look at me!

Narrator: They did look at him for not more than 1 minute. Toh was lost in the fog. The weather became even worse, and Matterhorn was completely out of sight.

Tjaart: I will go to rescue Toh! What if he breaks a leg, or gets lost in the fog?? I am going... see you later guys!

Alisa, Manols, Danielis: Uh, another one... Now what? Shall we wait for them? Today it's the last day, and we have to return the car tomorrow morning! What crappy situation is this? These Asians don't know anything about balanced life in nature, enjoying the air and local products... Let's just have a peaceful walk around.

Narrator: A few hours later

Alisa, Manols, Danielis: Hi Tjaart... did you find Toh?

Tjaart: No, I couldn't figure out which of the numerous trails he took, so I ran up and down a few of them, but Toh was too far ahead. And then all of a sudden I got lost in the thick mountain fog and couldn't find any path to find back my way. But you know what? Suddenly the clouds opened up and I could see which way to go back! Wow, I'm so grateful. This can only be a miracle!

Narrator: But Toh did not appear by miracle in the next few hours.

(the others seem very worried and walk around in circles)

Alisa: Toh!!!! Here you are! We were already thinking to leave without you! How could you leave us in this way? We were worried.

Toh: I went to Matterhorn (you losers)! I accomplished my goal. Now we can go back.

Dinner:

Alisa: Hi Toh! Nice to see you here! I prepared a special Bulgarian dish, very traditional, the way my mom cooks it... Hope you like it!

Toh: Hi Alisa! Good to see you! Smells good. Look, I brought here all the ingredients for making a curry!! A big package of curry, coconut milk, ginger, garlic, chilly, shrimps and broccoli! I will teach you now how to make curry, in this way you know more about the great Chinese Malaysian cuisine (*to himself*: and this will save the dinner after all)

Alisa: Wow, never seen someone eating chicken drumsticks with chopsticks! This is probably following the great Chinese tradition...

In the coffee room: Toh, Thomas some other people.

Thomas:(loudly): I hate this big banks, we should abolish them. They are all criminal. And this stupid cars, polluting my city. And..

Toh: Thomas...I

Thomas: No no, don't interrupt me. And anyway, all this Chinese cheap stupid import products... see my headphones are broken again,...

Toh: But wait...

Thomas: A damn, also this coffee machine is broken... arrgg I just go home!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Narrator: Thomas goes to his office, takes his jacket, has a last look at his PC

Thomas: What, 27 new emails from Toh?!?!?

Narrator: So what is the fate of a science ninja in a far-away country in the West? It's a hard process of learning that the Westerners just stay the same bunch of unconvinced, stubborn, impersonal, lazy people. Or is it perhaps the sobering reality that you slowly turn into one of them yourself? No no! This cannot happen! No sandwiches for lunch anymore. Stay in your shorts. Stay optimistic and fit! (And perhaps produce more little Tohs to strengthen the forces). We need a way to keep all the science ninjas fit and healthy and excited, and we have found the perfect device just for this...

Hand him his Nintendo Wii.