



## STUDIO OCHENTA ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT

### MIJA (ESPAÑOL) – 202: NONG, THE GOOD BOY

[00:07]

Hello, I'm Mija and this podcast is about my family: Those who are alive, those long gone and those still dreaming. Here's what you need to know about Nong: He's a big foodie. He LOVES to talk to everyone: his family, his friends, and even the people he meets on the street. He's also a bit of a philosopher.

[00:30]

Nong is my *dad*.

[00:3]

So here goes: Ten minutes to tell his story.

[00:45]

Nong is the 5th of 10 children born to Pao Kong, a dentist, and Sao Yeng, a shopkeeper. He lived in a nice house with his brothers and sisters in the countryside near Canton, in the south of China.

[01:02]

Sao Yang had already given birth to four boys when she became pregnant again. She was thrilled with the news, but wondered if this time it would finally be a girl. The day of the birth, when the doctor told her it's a boy, she couldn't hide her disappointment. But then she looked at him, and he looked at her and she changed her mind.

[01:26]

The whole village told her that they had never seen such a beautiful baby, so chubby, so plump. She had such a kind face. They named him Wong, the little king.

[01:38]

Her 5th boy was so cute and kind to everyone, that he had become the favorite of the neighborhood. Everybody's little darling. They called him "Good Boy"

[01:55]

In Canton slang, the word for good boy is "Nong". Everywhere he went people would say: here come's "Nong"

[02:03]

When he went to the grocery store to help his mom, NONGA! And when he went to feed the chickens NONGA! When he made tea for his aunties along NONGA!

[02:11]

And that's how my father became Nong, the good boy of the family. After that, Nong, Sao Yeng and Pao Kong had 5 more children. 3 girls and 2 boys. The parents would go into town to work all week, so Nong's four older brothers took turns cooking food for him and his other brothers and sisters.

[02:48]

When Pao Kong would come home from work, he would always say, "I am grateful for my children. We have a home, a family. That's the most important thing. No matter what happens in life, always stay together. " Even though they weren't sure why their father repeated those words every day, his children would listen to him and say, "Yes, Daddy, we promise."

[03:10]

But one day, Sao Yeng and Pao Kong stopped going to work. They stayed home and held meetings with the neighbors. In the village, the adults started talking and getting restless. Then one evening, at the table, Pao Kong said, "Tonight, children, you'll have to pack your bags. Take a few things, not too heavy to carry. Tomorrow we must leave."

[03:28]

Nong was 13 years old. He didn't understand, but he trusted his parents. He packed his suitcase, and the next day everyone hit the road. After one year and a half, knowing his family traveled from the countryside to the city of lights. After 1 year and a half, Nong and his family arrived in the city of lights.

[04:05]

At the age of 14, Nong enrolled in a French school. And he chose a French first name: Rémi. Everything was different in France, sure. The concrete roads were unfamiliar to this country family. So was the language, so distant from their own... But they found that many things were the same. Here the word for bread was baguette. And the word for chopsticks? Baguette too.

[04:25]

Here, the meal, together with friends and family, was just as important. And, there was one thing that never changed. Karma. That was the same, no matter where you were on the planet.

[04:41]

The family was big and didn't have much money, but they were tight-knit, and that was the most important thing. Though his siblings found good fortune through education, they were still a big family. So, Nong had to earn money to help them get by. When he finished school, he got a job in a garage.

[05:07]

He liked his work. He could spend hours repairing cars. One day, his boss asked him for a favor. He told him: *"Remi, I need a driver for a friend's move to Nice this weekend. You would have to help him load a truck, drive it, unload it and take it back to the garage. Can you do that?"*

[05:24]

Nong didn't feel like it. He was tired from his work week, he had worked a lot of overtime even though it was unpaid. But he was his boss, after all.

[05:28]

If he refused, maybe he'd take it out on him. And if he was fired, he would have a hard time finding another job. So he said, "Yeah, no problem."

[05:38]

He took the truck, drove it until dark, then unloaded the boxes the next day. He hit the road again. But on the way home, a car hit the truck. Nong had to be taken to the hospital. He told his boss to ask him to come home directly so he wouldn't be late for Monday morning clients if he didn't come back. He'd be fired.

[06:06]

Nong was a good worker. But this time it was too much. He said to himself, health and family is the most important thing. So much for my job.

[06:15]

He hung up on him the next day. She was the one who quit. That's when he decided to change careers. Like many immigrants, he did what anyone would do in his position. He became a taxi driver.

[06:32]

He roamed the streets of the city of lights chatting with his customers in broken french, and english. And that's not all: KARMA...Nong's got really good karma.

[06:44]

When someone asks him a favor, he never refuses. To fix, tinker, lend, he's always the first to offer. He always does good deeds, and the universe pays him back. It's not for nothing that he's called Nong, the good boy. When he had his car accident in Nice, the shock was violent. He could have died. However, after a night of observation in hospital, he escaped unharmed. (gong). Another time, he went on holiday by the sea. He didn't know how to swim. He almost drowned when, out of nowhere, a lady came to his rescue. (gong)

[07:18]

No matter what happened, Nong always made it out of trouble. Thanks to karma. **(Gong)**

[07:22]

I would now like to end my ten minutes with this: When I was little, I only saw Nong on weekends or during school holidays. The rest of the time I was with my mother. So when we saw each other, we tried to catch up. In his taxi, Nong would sing at the top of his lungs... Sometimes it was the BEE GEES in broken English. Other times, it was Dalida, but with a Chinese accent.

[07:57]

He would sing "Parole, Parole, Parolé " and laugh out loud. It was always cheerful in my father's car. I sang as loud as he did and we laughed together. Ever since then, when I hear a Dalida song on the radio, I think of him.

Ever since then, when I hear a Dalida song on the radio, I think of him.

Nong has been in Paris for over 40 years. In all that time has made Paris his home. Nong wanted have a large family as united as Sao Yeng and Pao Kong. So when he done 20, he promised himself to have at least three children. That was his dream.

[08:30]

In Paris, he met Hien, with whom he had two children. Then life separated them and he met Florence, with whom he had three children. He became a French citizen and filled his children's lives with joy, funny stories from his clients and Chinese philosophy. He bought a big apartment with a balcony where his brothers and sisters and now his children can come whenever they want to eat and chat.

[09:0]

Nong loved China. He loved their house in the country, surrounded by fields. But in Paris, he found a new home Different, but familiar:

He found the same foods, the same language, and the same community in the 13th arrondissement, where the chinese and larger asian community lives.

He found China in France.

[09:09]

When I asked him about it, he said, I love France. It welcomed me, my parents, my brothers and my sisters. It's where my children were born. It's my country now. The country, my family. I am Chinese from France.

[10:01]

This episode was produced by Studio Ochenta. Our Executive Producer is Lory Martinez. Our Associate Producer is Melanie Hong. Assistant Producer is Kevin Hong. Story by Melanie Hong. Sound design by Lory Martinez. Artist: Tiffanie Delune. Theme: Gabriel Dalmasso Follow us on twitter and instagram @mijapodcast, m-i-j-a podcast. If you liked the show, you should tell a friend about it and leave us a few stars on apple podcasts in the meantime. See you next time!

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