

## Graduation Day.

There was a special day to celebrate, back in November. A friend of mine was graduating from a nursing program(me) which she had been in for two years. Normally, as a young student, two years of study isn't that much. However, she is in her forties, married, and has two boys, so it was quite a challenge. Mijung, is my very good friend from Korea. We have known eachother for about seven years. Infact, our boys went to the same preschool, and it was there that we met eachother. We got together once after preschool and had lunch while the children played, and our friendship took off\* from there. Mijung is both compassionate and intelligent, so I think that she has the right qualities to make an effective nurse. I actually haven't seen her much for the past two years because of her busy schedule\*. Knowing how much effort she had put into her studies, and how difficult it had been to maintain a balance between studying full time, and also having a family, I was determined to go to her graduation ceremony to show my support. It took place in the gymnasium of the college that she studied at, here in Wenatchee. By the time I found a parking spot and ran into the building, it was packed with people, and the teachers were giving their speeches. It was warm in the gym. Families, dressed elegantly, were sitting in groups, holding flowers, and looking very proud. There was a surprisingly large number of children running around (girls in pretty dresses, boys in smart suits) unaware of the formality\* of the occasion. They must have enjoyed the spacious feel of the room, and the shiny floors. A few mothers got up and told their kids not to roll around on the floor, and they did their best to wipe off their children's now not-so-clean clothes. Finally, the time came to give out the graduation badges. I took off my coat, got out my camera, and squeezed past\* a few people so I could see my friend clearly enough to take a good photo. "We will hand out the badges in alphabetical order," announced the speaker. "Oh, great! Mijung's last name begins with 'W'; I'm going to be waiting for a while," I thought to myself. It was a school day, and I had just over an hour before having to pick the kids up. The graduates approached the podium\* to say a few words and receive their badges. Most of them were tearful and happy; they thanked their family members for supporting them, and those with children said a big thankyou for everyone's patience. I actually grew impatient, listening to all of the mini-speeches. I didn't want to leave without seeing Mijung. I couldn't quite get to the perfect spot to photograph her: if I moved to the left, a flower arrangement blocked her face. If I moved to the right the podium was in the way. Finally, a little frustrated, I just walked out in front of the first row of seats and started to take pictures. Her name was called. She got up quickly and joined her family at the podium. She hugged her family and everyone applauded. She was one of the few students who received the extra honor of graduating with straight 'A's': Magna cum laude, I think it's called. During the applause, I managed to catch Mijung's eye, and I waved and blew her a kiss. What an accomplishment! She deserves to feel proud. I'm sure she'll make a positive impact on people who need physical help. It was such a happy moment for so many students. Even the very young children who were running around and sliding on the floor, clapped as if they knew what was going on. I checked my watch, and I was glad that I did, because I only had five minutes left before I had to leave. I fumbled\* to get my camera back in the bag, I quickly handed a present for Mijung to her husband, and waved goodbye.

Related vocabulary:to take off, busy schedule, formality, to squeeze (past)

1. The business took off as soon as it opened. It has done really well since then.
2. I have to change my busy schedule; it's too much. I'm so busy that it's not even practical!
3. You must understand the formality of the occasion; the correct dress and etiquette should be used.
4. She squeezed through the crowd to get a better look at the pop singer.