

FOR WOMEN WITH SOMETHING TO GET OFF THEIR CHESTS

BUST

CHICKS ON SPEED

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CHRISTINE VACHON, MIKE MILLS, PRINCESS SUPERSTAR,
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I AM WOMAN, HEAR ME ROAR

Lady lion dance troupe shows its pride

CHANCES ARE, YOU'VE seen it in a movie or caught a glimpse in Chinatown around Lunar New Year. Your ears may have rung from the clanging cymbals, and your heart may have raced from the intensity, energy, and sheer force of the display. This spectacle, called lion dance, is a Chinese martial art in which two people move gracefully under a lion costume made of cloth, bamboo, papier-mâché, and string. Dancers use steps derived from kung fu to enact the thousand-year-old ritual, but though it is believed to bring peace, good luck, and prosperity, the dance has been an activity usually denied to women.

The prevalent belief is that Asian women aren't strong enough to maneuver the 10- to 15-pound lion heads. But Bostonian Unitarian Minister Cheng Imm Tan bucked tradition when she started the nation's only all-women lion dance troupe in 1998. Naming her group Gund Kwok, Chinese for heroine, she found a lion dance master who would teach women, recruited ten of her friends to join her, and is now the thriving troupe's leader. "Gund Kwok is about learning how to not settle for the small life that women have been offered and are expected to live," says Tan. "It's about challenging ourselves to live with no limits, even if that is not what is being offered to us."

Now 20 Asian women, ranging from a teenager to a grandmother, meet weekly to hone their ancient craft. These women, who refer to each other as "sisters," have performed everywhere from weddings and museums to the Democratic National Convention. "Even after we do well, we never settle," says Tan in regard to her group's success.



Gund Kwok gets ready to rock

"We're always looking for higher levels of accomplishment, both personally and as a troupe." To learn more, visit Gund Kwok online at www.gundkwok.org. [JILL SBK MORNEAU]



she-bonics OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF BABES [COMPILED BY TRACIE EGAN]

"CREATING A CULTURAL ICON OUT OF SOMEONE WHO GOES, 'I'M STUPID, ISN'T IT CUTE?' MAKES ME WANT TO THROW DAGGERS! MY GRANDMA AND MY MOTHER DID NOT FIGHT FOR WHAT [THEY] FOUGHT FOR SO YOU CAN START TELLING WOMEN IT'S FUN TO BE STUPID. SAYING THAT TO YOUNG WOMEN, LITTLE GIRLS, MY DAUGHTER? IT'S NOT OK."

Reese Witherspoon

taking on the Parises and Jessicas of the world in *Marie Claire*

"You know the commercials for women's products that are like, 'To be fresh down there?' I thought deodorant was the same thing, something people used [to douche]. So I never wore any. It was my seventh-grade year, I was in athletics and my friends always called me Smelly Kelly." **Kelly Clarkson** in *Jane*

"My mother would give me her hand-me-downs to take to school. I'm walking in to school, and people are looking at me, like, 'What is this little girl in seventh grade doing with a Louis Vuitton bag and a white fox?'" **Lil' Kim** explaining her origins of flossing in *Interview*

"I couldn't be 105 pounds even if I tried, and more important I *really don't want* to be 105 pounds. And also I'm a completely normal shape. Hanging on to that sense of normality keeps me from having an abnormal brain." **Kate Winslet** in *Vogue*

"Look at Hillary [Clinton]. She managed to get through a very difficult personal situation [publicly]. I've told her that several times, to her face, that my admiration for her went up tremendously. She managed to hold her head up and stay with her husband. You know my first reaction? Dump him." **Martha Stewart** in *Vanity Fair*