Last Look
The Liberating Path
By Marcie Bianco
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On June 3, 2023, Venerable Dhammananda (left) and other female Buddhist monks—known as bhikkhunis—bless a woman and her dog in Nakhon Pathom, Thailand, to celebrate Vesak, which commemorates the birth, enlightenment, and death of Buddha.

Bhikkhunis are not officially recognized as Buddhist monks in Thailand and are even banned from being ordained on Thai soil. Venerable Dhammananda, who traveled to Sri Lanka in 2003 to get ordained, and the bhikkhunis of the country's first all-female Songdhammakalyani monastery have campaigned for recognition and inclusion by practicing care and compassion for all of society. — MARCIE BIANCO