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**TIBETAN MEDITATION**  
FOR A  
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### **His Holiness the Dalai Lama**

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Traditional Tibetan culture nourished a deep and powerful integration of spiritual and practical understanding, respecting both of these aspects of human nature and their potential for supporting health and healing. For example, all phases of Tibetan herbal medicine -- asking for help, searching for herbs, preparing medicines, diagnosing illness, prescribing treatments, taking the medicine -- all of them are carried out with a devotion to spiritual practices and training shared by the patient and the physician, their families, and the entire community.

The near universal appreciation of these spiritual practices stemmed primarily from their practical effectiveness in fostering basic sanity, compassion, and understanding -- progress on the path toward enlightenment -- but over time certain meditation practices were recognized as especially appropriate for emphasis by people troubled by physical or psychological illness, and those who want to help them.

Why is retreat important? In order for our spirituality, pure morality, wisdom, single-pointed concentration and insight into reality to grow, we need time and space. The normal twentieth-century environment does not give us this. It induces either distraction or sluggishness, and retreat can take us beyond both. As human beings, we have the potential for unlimited growth, for limitless compassion and wisdom, bodhicitta and the six perfections. So retreat is very important in expediting this.

Furthermore, Dharma experiences come only when you put yourself into a Dharma situation. If you don't immerse your body, speech and mind in Dharma, the Dharma can't really be of use to you. So retreat is very important in promoting your development.