

## Beginnings

Motivated, possibly, by the instinct to ease pain, or through a chance discovery, our distant ancestors would have noted what appeared to be an effective treatment and tried to produce the same effect again when a similar problem arose. Without our armoury of drugs and surgical techniques, and before healing became specialized enough to employ people full time, they had to find methods they could use on themselves. Lacking detailed knowledge of the body's physiological processes, they had to rely on subtle observations.

Indian traditional medicine, Ayurveda, includes work on the body's energies. Ancient Greek medical theories (from which orthodox

Western medicine developed) also included a system of body energies, although this later fell out of favour. Acupressure is part of the Chinese tradition, which is particularly well documented and highly evolved, having developed continuously over a period of more than 3000 years.

Feet and hands, two hard-working parts of the body, have always been popular sites for massage. There is an element of loving care in this treatment, which undoubtedly

**BELOW** Fragment of an Indian wall painting of the Buddha, showing his robe and feet. The painting has been dated to the 7-8th centuries. It is possible that reflexology originates from India.

