

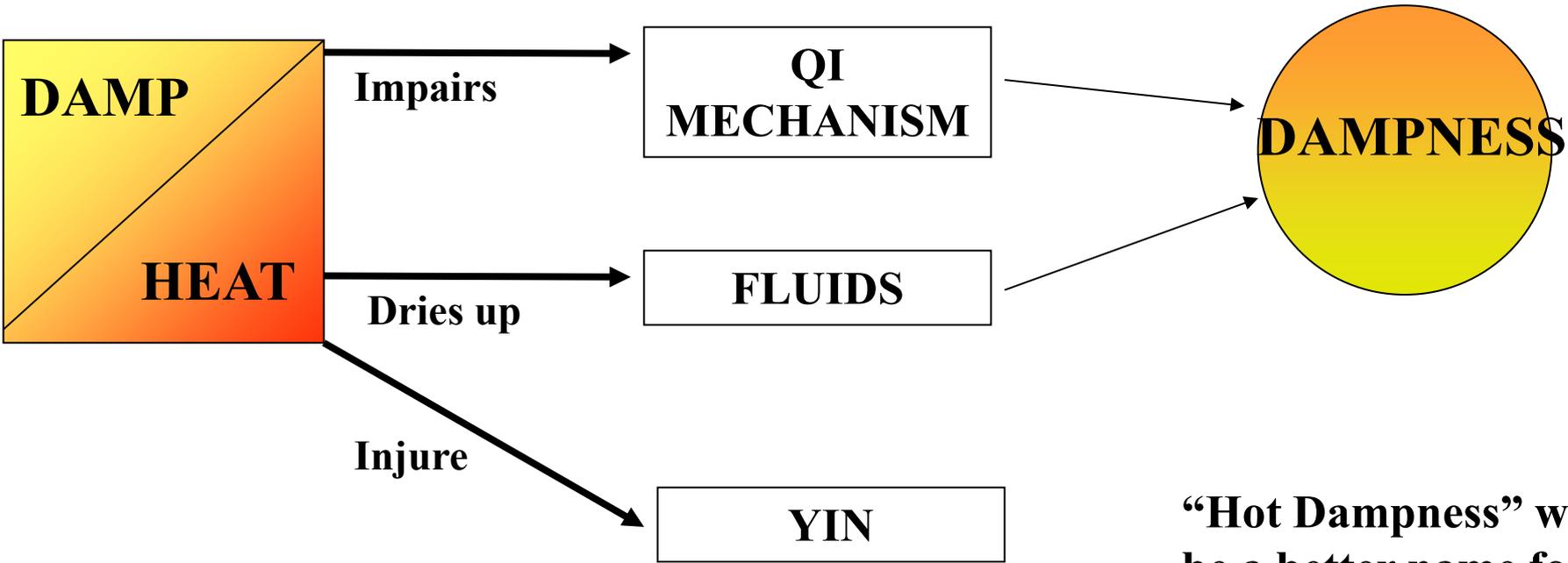
## DAMP-HEAT

Damp-Heat should be discussed separately because it is such a common pathogenic factor that can be the cause of a very wide variety of problems. However, it is also true to say that, in China and Chinese books and journals, Damp-Heat is slightly exaggerated in its importance.

For example, in China, every urinary problem is due to Damp-Heat, whereas we also see a lot of urinary problems with Dampness but without Heat, and a lot of urinary problems caused by Qi stagnation or Qi sinking. Similarly, any Gall-Bladder problem will always be attributed to Gall-Bladder Damp-Heat, whereas in the West we see a lot of patients with Gall-Bladder problems and Dampness but not much Heat.

Before starting our discussion I would like to clarify something regarding the nature of Damp-Heat. In Damp-Heat, Dampness is the predominant pathogenic factor: it is the Dampness that is hot, not the Heat that is damp. In fact, it would be better to call it “Hot Dampness” rather than “Damp-Heat”; however, I will continue calling it “Damp-Heat” because this term is in such common use. This means that, in the treatment of Damp-Heat, we must concentrate on draining or resolving Dampness rather than on clearing Heat. However, we do of course use cold herbs too to clear Heat.

Damp-Heat is particularly important as a pathogenic factor because it itself can become a cause of disease. In fact, not only Dampness obstructs the Qi mechanism leading to more Dampness, but Heat also dries up the fluids and condenses them into more Dampness. Furthermore, the Heat part of Damp-Heat (especially if predominant) may also injure Yin.



**“Hot Dampness” would be a better name for it**

# AETIOLOGY OF DAMPNESS

## **EXTERNAL**

Dampness can derive from environmental or climatic dampness: thus, it may be due to humid weather (whether hot or cold), but also to damp living conditions, such as living in damp houses.

Exterior Dampness can also be caught by wearing wet clothes, wading in water, working in damp places or sitting on damp ground.

## **Seasonal**

External Damp-Heat is more predominant in summer and late summer, and specifically from the “Great Heat” period (of the 24 periods of a year) to the “White Dew” period, i.e. roughly two months before the Autumn equinox.

## **Prevailing Qi of the place**

The seasonal is a heavenly exterior factor, the prevailing Qi of a place is an earthly exterior factor. This is due to prevailing conditions of a place, i.e. a low-lying, damp place, a place prone to fog, damp living conditions in the house, etc.

## **INTERNAL**

### **Diet**

Dampness may result from the excessive consumption of greasy foods, dairy foods, sweets, sugar, cold-raw foods. Damp-Heat may also arise from excessive alcohol drinking together with that of greasy-fried foods.

Dampness may also be due to overeating (in the same way as Retention of Food) or from irregular eating habits.

## **Work**

Excessive physical work (including sports, exercises, lifting, gym, etc.) can weaken the Spleen and lead to Dampness.

## **Internal injury of Spleen**

Weakness of the Spleen deriving from a chronic illness.

## **CONSTITUTIONAL**

A constitutional weakness of the Earth element predisposes the patient to Spleen deficiency and Dampness.

On the other hand, a constitutional tendency to a Fullness of the Earth (for example, people with a constitutional tendency to Stomach-Heat) may lead to Heat in the Stomach and Spleen which combines with Dampness.