

**Seminar SAW History of Science, History of Text, 2011-2016
SAW Three-day Meeting**

**How do writings in the astral sciences
document mathematical practices and the practitioners?**

February 19th, 2015

Matthias Hayek (CRCAO, Université Paris Diderot)

Rotating Disks and Straight Rulers: Paper Instruments in Japanese Early Modern Divination Manuals

Abstract - Divination in China and Japan can be performed using a wide array of devices. Among them, chromomantic techniques from the Tang period onwards have used three-dimensional boards, and topo/domomantic techniques have employed various kinds of measuring tools. In 18th century Japan, the latest avatars of such techniques were transmitted through printed manuals to a broader and broader audience. In these manuals, we can find elements, which seem to be two dimensional, paper renditions of said devices. In this presentation, I will focus on two types of such items: multilayered circular tables used to determine auspicious directions, and graduated rulers for ‘measuring’ the auspiciousness of objects.