



US006515638B2

(12) **United States Patent**
Chigira et al.

(10) **Patent No.:** **US 6,515,638 B2**
(45) **Date of Patent:** ***Feb. 4, 2003**

(54) **IMAGE DISPLAY APPARATUS**
(75) Inventors: **Tatsuo Chigira**, Yokohama (JP);
Toshiki Ishino, Hiratsuka (JP)
(73) Assignee: **Canon Kabushiki Kaisha**, Tokyo (JP)
(*) Notice: This patent issued on a continued prosecution application filed under 37 CFR 1.53(d), and is subject to the twenty year patent term provisions of 35 U.S.C. 154(a)(2).

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Primary Examiner—Xiao Wu
(74) *Attorney, Agent, or Firm*—Fitzpatrick, Cella, Harper & Scinto

(21) Appl. No.: **09/334,591**
(22) Filed: **Jun. 17, 1999**
(65) **Prior Publication Data**
US 2002/0036597 A1 Mar. 28, 2002

(30) **Foreign Application Priority Data**
Jun. 19, 1998 (JP) 10-221158
Jun. 19, 1998 (JP) 10-221159
Jun. 19, 1998 (JP) 10-221160
(51) **Int. Cl.⁷** **G09G 5/00**
(52) **U.S. Cl.** **345/7; 345/8**
(58) **Field of Search** 345/7, 8, 9; 359/630, 359/631

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(57) **ABSTRACT**
An image display apparatus includes a display element for displaying a video image, a backlight source for illuminating the display element, and a sculptured surface prism for guiding light from the display element. The sculptured surface prism enlarges the video image on the display element and presents the video image to an observer. The display element and the sculptured surface prism are supported by a holding member. An electrical circuit board is provided to drive the display element. The electrical circuit board and the display element are electrically connected. The electrical circuit board is arranged behind the display element, behind the sculptured surface prism when viewed from the observer, or on one side of the sculptured surface prism when viewed by the observer.

53 Claims, 8 Drawing Sheets

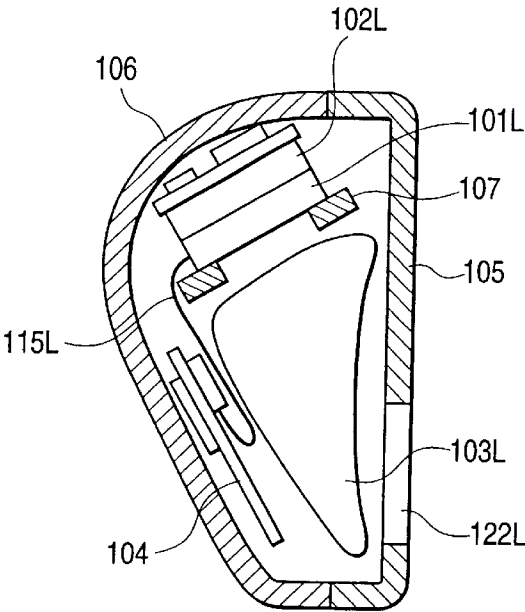


FIG. 1

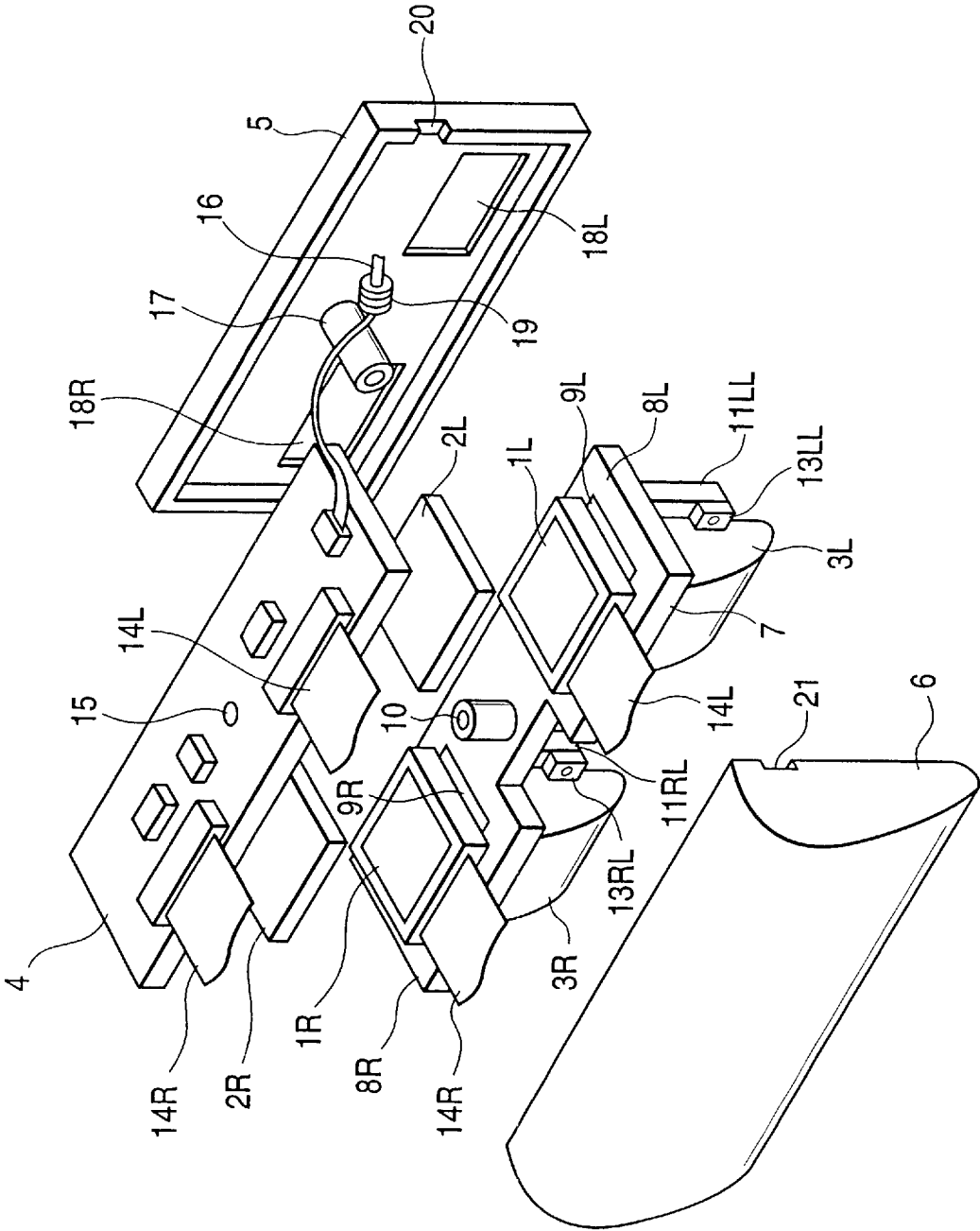


FIG. 2

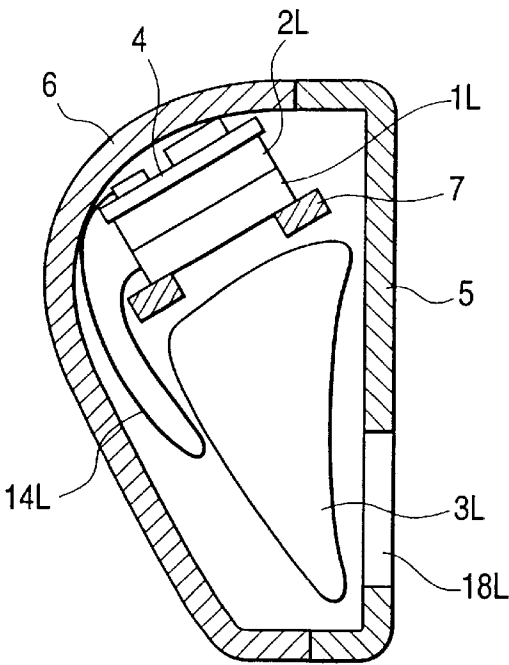


FIG. 3

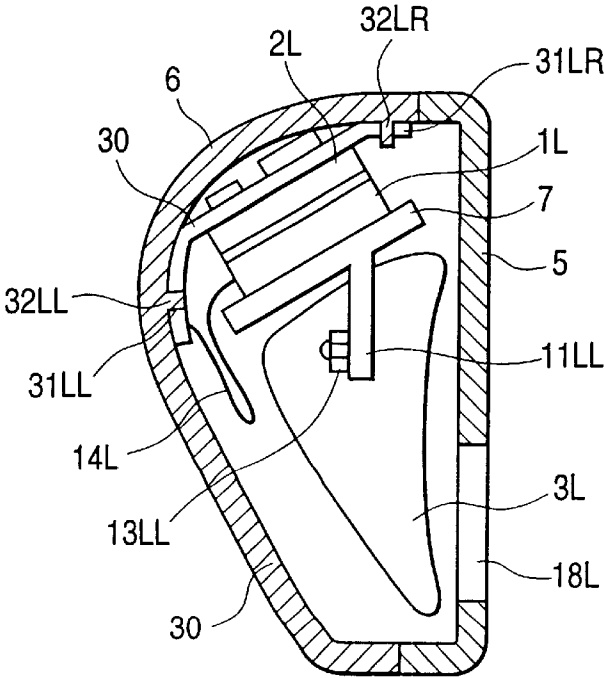


FIG. 4

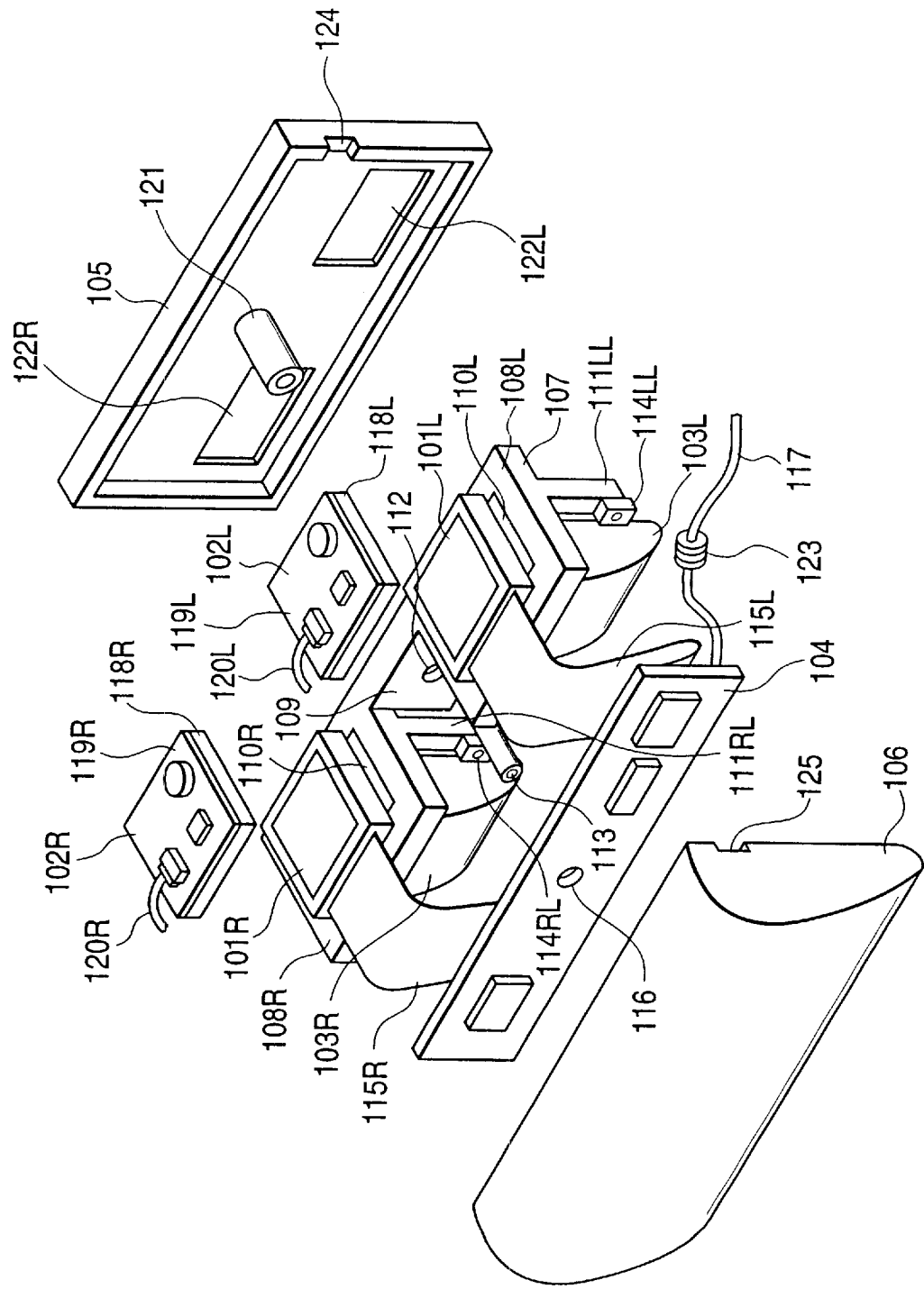


FIG. 5

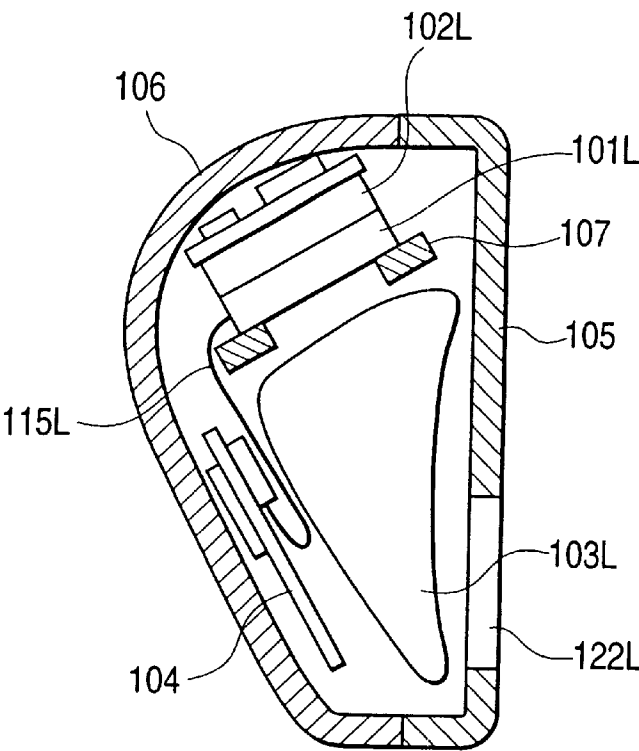


FIG. 7

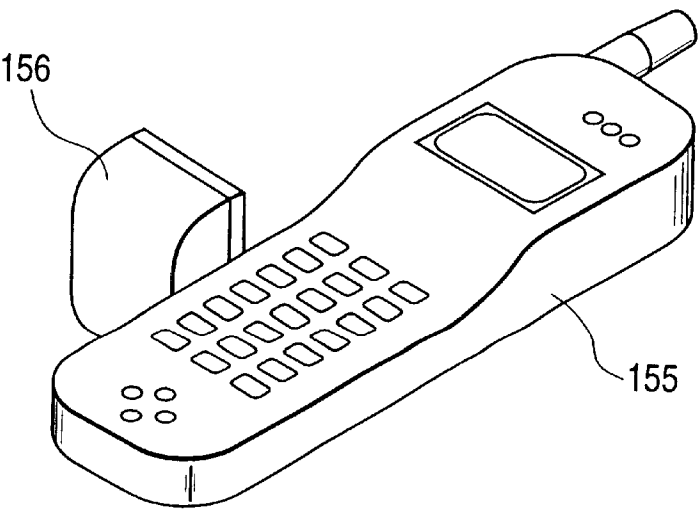


FIG. 6

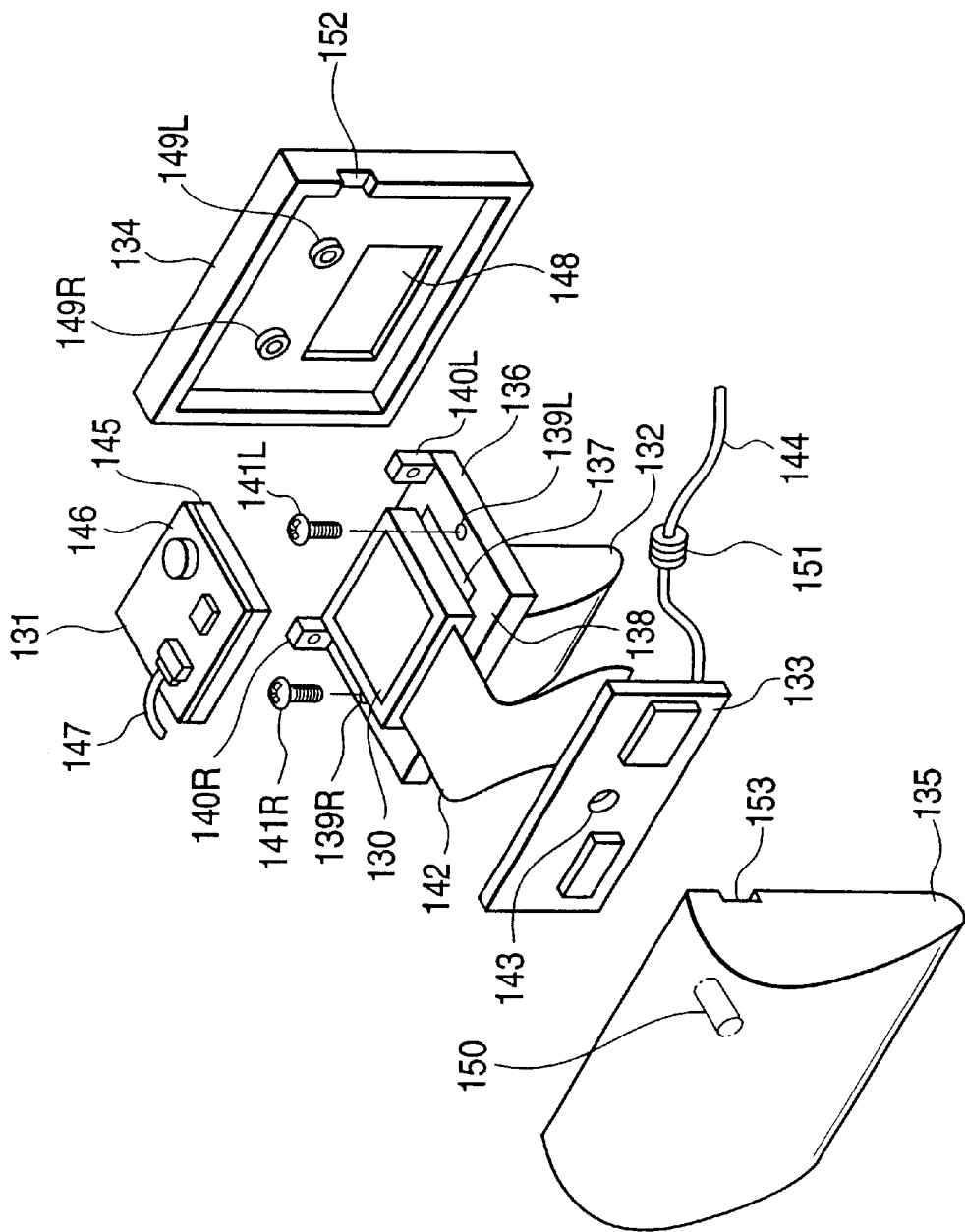


FIG. 8

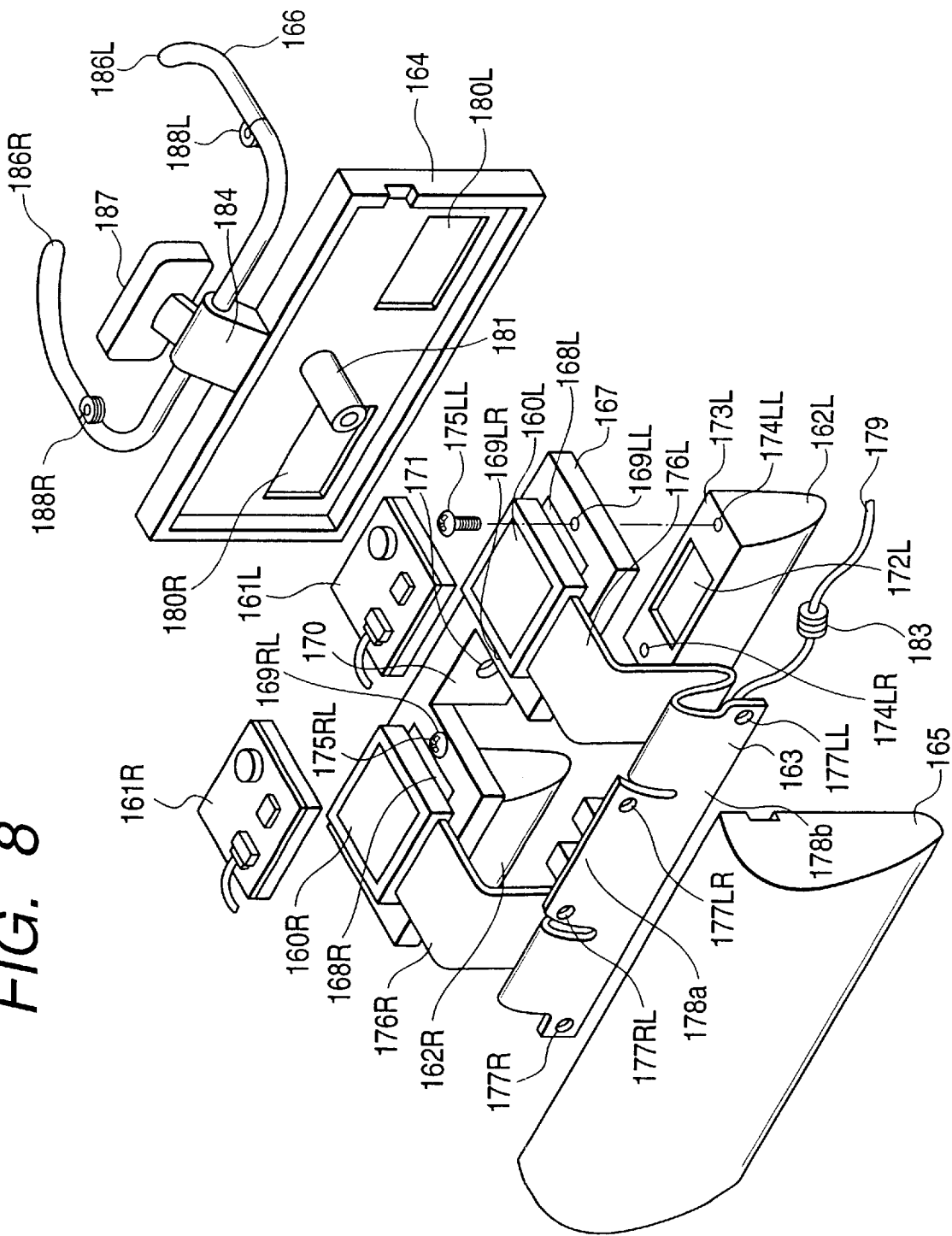


FIG. 9

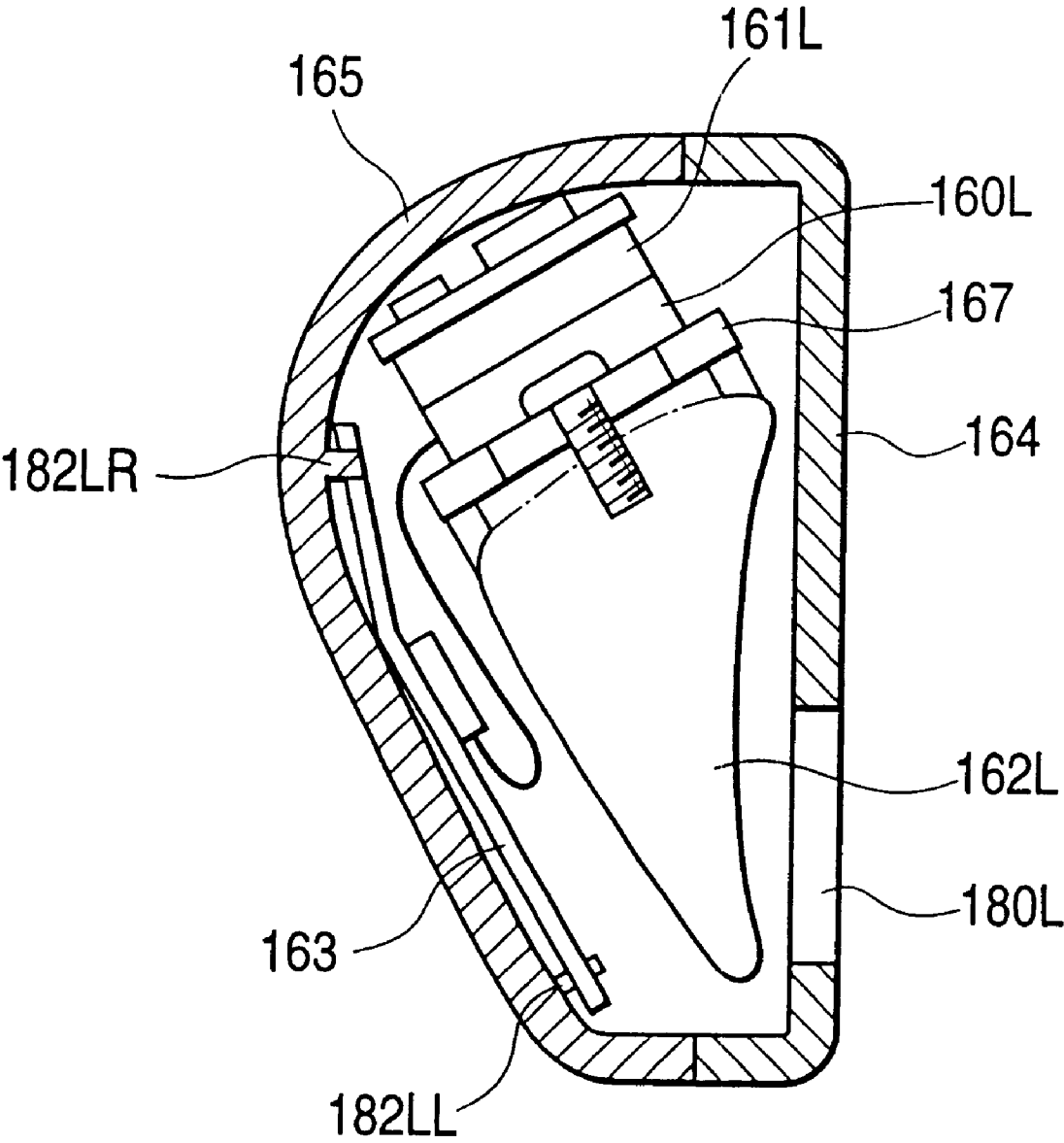


FIG. 10

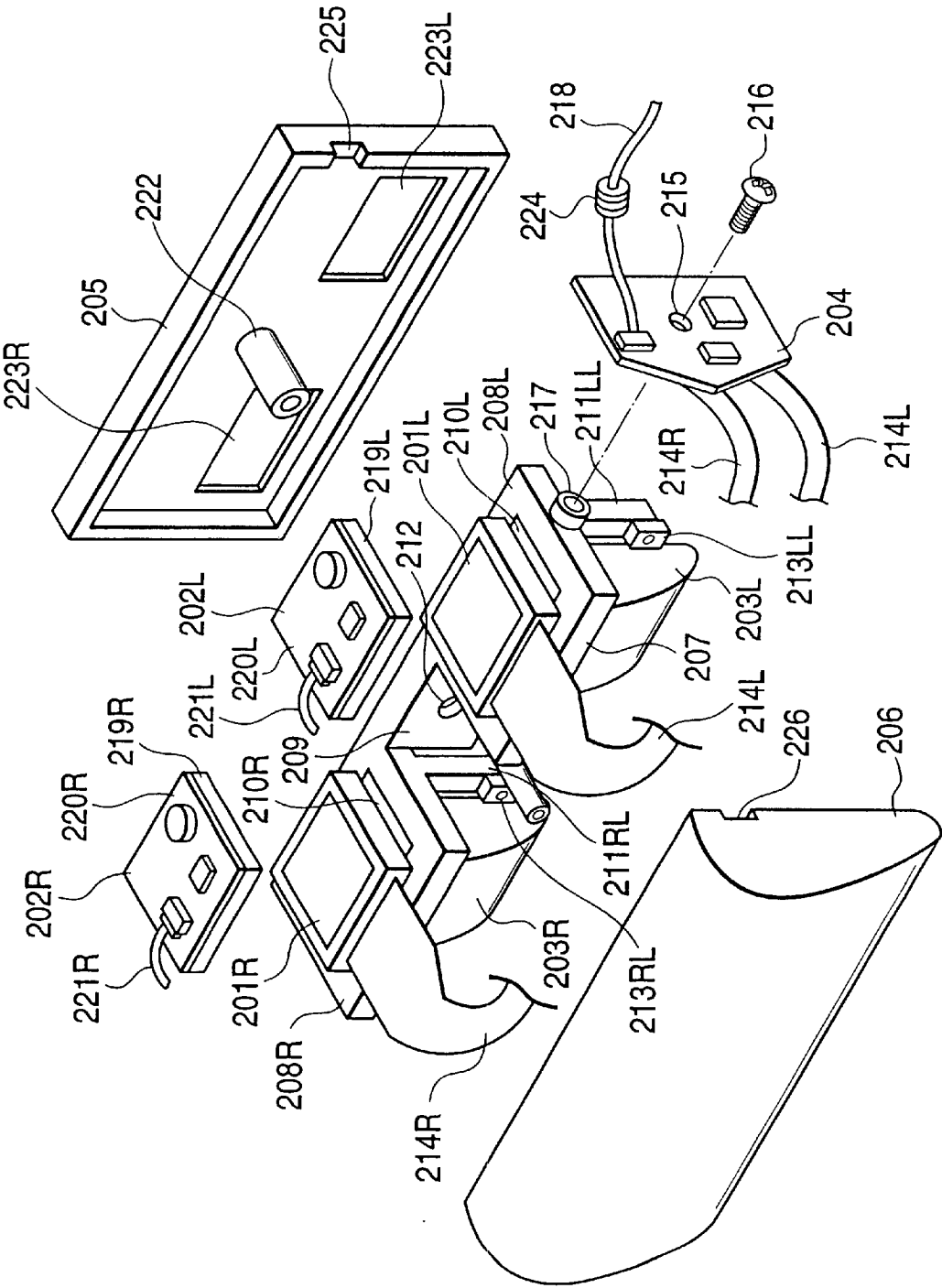


IMAGE DISPLAY APPARATUS

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. Field of the Invention

The present invention relates to an image display apparatus such as a head mounted display which is mounted on the head to see a video image.

2. Related Background Art

Recently, image display apparatuses called head mounted displays (HMDs) which are mounted on the heads to see video images projected on display units are used for the purpose of seeing video images or screens of personal computers.

An HMD realizes appreciation of videos and the like anywhere without any influence on ambience. However, since it is mounted on the head, a demand has arisen for a lightweight apparatus with light fitting properties or a portable apparatus easy to detach. In addition, a portable facsimile image display apparatus which aims at seeing a facsimile image, or a portable image display apparatus such as a portable video phone has also been proposed.

As an HMD, an apparatus using a half mirror and concave mirror as an optical system and an LCD panel or a transmission liquid crystal display as a display element, which illuminates the LCD panel with backlight to see an image on the LCD panel is disclosed in Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 8-251510. The present applicant has also proposed an optical system suitable for an HMD in Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 7-104209.

As a portable image display apparatus, a transceiver having a small virtual image display is disclosed in Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 7-235892. A display element and optical system suitable for this apparatus are disclosed in Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 8-327920.

However, since the HMD disclosed in Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 8-251510 uses a half mirror and concave mirror as an optical system, the optical system is large in the back-and-forth direction with respect to the line of sight. In addition, since the electrical circuit is arranged above the optical system, the dimension also becomes larger in the vertical direction to result in poor portability. This degrades the portability and makes it difficult to carry the apparatus in a pocket. Furthermore, since a half mirror is used, no bright screen display is possible.

In Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 7-104209, an apparatus uses a sculptured surface prism to reduce the dimensions of the optical system and obtain light fitting properties. However, much improvement is required to carry the apparatus in a pocket or for portable use as an HMD.

In the portable image display apparatus disclosed in Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 8-327920, since the optical system is formed by overlapping lenses in the direction of line of sight, and the electrical circuit board is arranged in the direction parallel to line of sight, the dimension in the back-and-forth direction becomes large.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

It is an object of the present invention to provide an image display apparatus which solves the above-described problems and realizes small dimensions and excellent portability.

Other objects, features, and advantages of the present invention will become apparent from the following descrip-

tion of preferred embodiments in conjunction with the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 is a perspective view showing the first embodiment;

FIG. 2 is a sectional view showing the main part;

FIG. 3 is a sectional view showing the second embodiment;

FIG. 4 is a perspective view showing the third embodiment;

FIG. 5 is a sectional view of the main part;

FIG. 6 is a perspective view showing the fourth embodiment;

FIG. 7 is a perspective view showing a portable video phone of the fifth embodiment;

FIG. 8 is a perspective view showing the sixth embodiment;

FIG. 9 is a perspective view showing the main part; and

FIG. 10 is a perspective view showing the seventh embodiment.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Embodiments of the present invention will be described below with reference to the accompanying drawings.

FIG. 1 is a perspective view showing an image display apparatus according to the first embodiment. FIG. 2 is a sectional view. This image display apparatus mainly comprises transmission LCD panels 1L and 1R for displaying video images for the left and right eyes of a user, respectively, flat tube-type fluorescent backlight units 2L and 2R for illuminating the LCD panels 1L and 1R, respectively, sculptured surface prisms 3L and 3R for enlarging video images on the LCD panels 1L and 1R and projecting them onto the left and right eyes, respectively, and an electrical circuit board 4 for controlling the system. These members are compactly accommodated in cover members, i.e., a base cover 5 and lid cover 6 of, e.g., an ABS resin.

The LCD panels 1L and 1R and sculptured surface prisms 3L and 3R are supported by a holding member 7 formed from, e.g., a polycarbonate resin. The holding member 7 has attachment surfaces 8L and 8R for attaching the LCD panels 1L and 1R for left and right eyes. The attachment surfaces 8L and 8R have openings 9L and 9R, respectively. A board attachment boss 10 projects upward between the attachment surfaces 8L and 8R.

The LCD panels 1L and 1R are positioned such that predetermined relationships hold between the LCD panels 1L and 1R and sculptured surface prisms 3L and 3R, respectively, the display portions are positioned in the ranges of the openings 9L and 9R of the holding member 7, and the user can obtain a natural view in observation, and fixed on the attachment surfaces 8L and 8R of the holding member 7 by bonding or screwing.

A total of four attachment flanges 11LL and 11LR, and 11RL and 11RR (attachment flanges 11LR and 11RR are not shown) are vertically formed at the two ends of the openings 9L and 9R on the lower side of the attachment surfaces 8L and 8R, respectively. A rib vertically formed between the attachment flanges 11LR and 11RL has an attachment hole 12 (not shown).

The sculptured surface prisms 3L and 3R are formed from, e.g., an acrylic resin and have optical characteristics as

3

disclosed in Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 7-104209. A total of four attachment flanges **13LL** and **13LR**, and **13RL** and **13RR** (attachment flanges **13LR** and **13RR** are not shown) are formed integrally with the side surfaces of the sculptured surface prisms **3L** and **3R**, respectively. The sculptured surface prisms **3L** and **3R** are positioned and fixed to the holding member **107** by bonding or screwing while making the attachment flanges **13LL**, **13LR**, **13RL**, and **13RR** correspond to the attachment flanges **11LL**, **11LR**, **11RL**, and **11RR** of the holding member **7**, respectively.

The backlight units **2L** and **2R** are fixed on the LCD panels **1L** and **1R**, respectively, via a spacer or the like by a known means such as bonding. The electrical circuit board **4** having a drive circuit is mounted on the backlight units **2L** and **2R**. The backlight units **2L** and **2R** are electrically connected to electrode patterns on the electrical circuit board by soldering.

Electrodes for driving the backlight units **2L** and **2R** are connected to the electrical circuit board **4** through flexible flat cables **14L** and **14R**, respectively. The flexible flat cables **14L** and **14R** are bent, e.g., once with a margin such that the LCD panels **1L** and **1R** can be moved in positioning them.

The electrical circuit board **4** is formed from, e.g., a multilayered glass epoxy board and has an attachment hole **15** at substantially the central portion. The electrical circuit board **4** is fixed to the board attachment boss **10** of the holding member **7** through the attachment hole **15** by a screw. Circuits for displaying video images on the LCD panels **1L** and **1R**, inverter circuits for turning on the backlight units **2L** and **2R**, and power supply circuit are formed on the electrical circuit board **4**. These circuits are connected to a video signal generation means such as a video deck including a video output circuit, signal processing circuit, and power supply circuit through an electrical wire **16** and a connector. The intermediate layer of the electrical circuit board **4** is partially grounded as a shield layer, so a high voltage generated in the inverter circuits is prevented from adversely affecting the video processing circuit as noise.

An attachment boss **17** projects at the center of the base cover **5** as a cover member. Openings **18L** and **18R** for left and right eyes are formed on the left and right sides of the attachment boss **17**. The attachment boss **17** has a screw hole at the center. The holding member **7** is fixed to the base cover **5** by screwing the base cover **5** through the attachment hole **12** of the holding member **7**. A damping member such as a rubber bush is inserted between the attachment hole **12** of the holding member **7** and the attachment boss **17** of the base cover **5**, so that the holding member **7** is prevented from being deformed by an external force applied to the base cover **5** to impede a natural view.

The base cover **5** and lid cover **6** are fixed by bonding or screwing while a bush **19** attached to the electrical wire **16** is sandwiched between a notch **20** of the base cover **5** and a notch **21** of the lid cover **6** to mechanically fix the electrical wire **16**.

The user mounts the image display apparatus with this arrangement on the head and looks in through the openings **18L** and **18R** of the base cover **5**. Video signals from the video output device are output to the LCD panels **1L** and **1R**. Video images on the LCD panels **1L** and **1R** illuminated with the backlight units **2L** and **2R** are enlarged through the sculptured surface prisms **3L** and **3R** and observed by the user.

Since the image display apparatus of this embodiment has an efficient component arrangement: for example, the elec-

4

trical circuit board **4** is positioned behind the LCD panels **1L** and **1R**, as shown in FIG. 2. Hence, the apparatus can be made compact. In assembly, the flexible flat cables **14L** and **14R** have slack and are bent at least once. For this reason, even when the LCD panels **1L** and **1R** move in positioning, the holding member **7** can be prevented from being applied with a force and deformed, and the LCD panels **1L** and **1R** can be prevented from shifting to adversely affect the video image. Since the electrical circuit board **4** is fixed to the holding member **7** at only substantially the central portion, the holding member **7** can be prevented from deforming due to the shape and, more particularly, the flatness of the electrical circuit board **4**, so the user can obtain a natural view.

In this embodiment, the inverter circuits for turning on the fluorescent backlight units **2L** and **2R** are also formed on the electrical circuit board **4**. When noise poses a problem, the inverter circuits are preferably formed on another board and arranged behind the backlight units.

FIG. 3 is a sectional view showing the arrangement of the second embodiment. The electrical circuit board of the first embodiment is a hard plate such as a glass epoxy board. In the second embodiment, the electrical circuit board is formed from a flexible printed board and positioned and fixed to a cover member, thereby making the entire apparatus more compact. The basic arrangement is almost the same as in the first embodiment. The same reference numerals as in the first embodiment denote the same parts in the second embodiment.

An electrical circuit board **30** is formed from a flexible printed board using, e.g., a polyimide resin as a base, and electrically connected to LCD panels **1L** and **1R** through flexible flat cables **14L** and **14R** integrated with the LCD panels **1L** and **1R**. Backlight units **2L** and **2R** are connected and fixed to the electrical circuit board **30** at positions opposing the LCD panels **1L** and **1R** by soldering. On the flat portion of the electrical circuit board **30**, circuits connected to a video signal generation means through an electrical wire **16** to display signals from the video signal generation means on the LCD panels **1L** and **1R**, inverter circuits for turning on the backlight units, and power supply circuit are formed, as in the first embodiment.

The electrical circuit board **30** has four attachment holes **31LL**, **31LR**, **31RL**, and **31RR** (attachment holes **31RL** and **31RR** are not shown). A lid cover **6** as a cover member has, on its inner surface, four attachment dowels **32LL**, **32LR**, **32RL**, and **32RR** (attachment dowels **32RL** and **32RR** are not shown) for positioning and fixing the electrical circuit board **30**. In assembling the apparatus, the attachment dowels **32LL**, **32LR**, **32RL**, and **32RR** are fitted in the attachment holes **31LL**, **31LR**, **31RL**, and **31RR** of the electrical circuit board **30**, respectively, and the electrical circuit board **30** is fixed to the lid cover **6** by screwing or the like.

Since the interval between the attachment dowels **32LL**, **32LR**, **32RL**, and **32RR** having directional components perpendicular to the viewing surface is made smaller than that between the attachment holes **31LL**, **31LR**, **31RL**, and **31RR** of the electrical circuit board **30** by a predetermined amount, the electrical circuit board **30** is fixed to the lid cover **6** by the elasticity of the electrical circuit board **30** formed from a flexible flat cable.

With this arrangement, the user mounts the image display apparatus on the head and looks in through openings **18L** and **18R** of a base cover **5**. Video signals from the video output device are output to the LCD panels **1L** and **1R**. The video images on the LCD panels **1L** and **1R** illuminated with

5

the backlight units **2L** and **2R** are enlarged through sculptured surface prisms **3L** and **3R** and observed by the user.

Since the electrical circuit board **30** in the image display apparatus is set along the inner wall of the lid cover **6** in assembling, the apparatus can be made compact. In addition, since the electrical circuit board **30** is formed from a flexible flat cable, it can be folded to concentrate circuit components of integrated circuits in the space between the LCD panels **1L** and **1R** and between the backlight units **2L** and **2R** for left and right eyes. Hence, the apparatus can be made more compact.

The image display apparatus of this embodiment has no mount portion, and the user holds the image display apparatus with a hand and looks in through the openings **18L** and **18R** of the base cover **5**. However, when the mount mechanism of an HMD is attached to the base cover **5**, the image display apparatus can also be used as an HMD.

FIG. 4 is a perspective view showing an image display apparatus according to the third embodiment. FIG. 5 is a sectional view. This will be described below although the description is partially the same as in the above embodiments. This image display apparatus mainly comprises transmission LCD panels **101L** and **101R** for displaying video images for the left and right eyes of a user, respectively, backlight units **102L** and **102R** for illuminating the LCD panels **1L** and **1R**, respectively, sculptured surface prisms **103L** and **103R** for enlarging video images on the LCD panels **101L** and **101R** and projecting them onto the left and right eyes, respectively, and an electrical circuit board **104** for controlling the system. These members are compactly accommodated in cover members, i.e., a base cover **5** and lid cover **6** of, e.g., an ABS resin.

The LCD panels **101L** and **101R** and sculptured surface prisms **103L** and **103R** are supported by a holding member **107** formed from, e.g., a polycarbonate resin. For the holding member **107**, attachment surfaces **108L** and **108R** for attaching the LCD panels **101L** and **101R** for left and right eyes are coupled by a vertical surface **109**. The attachment surfaces **108L** and **108R** have openings **110L** and **110R** at their central portions, respectively.

The LCD panels **101L** and **101R** are positioned such that predetermined relationships hold between the LCD panels **101L** and **101R** and sculptured surface prisms **103L** and **103R**, respectively, the display portions are positioned in the ranges of the openings **110L** and **110R** of the holding member **107**, so that the user can obtain a natural view in observation, and the display portions are fixed on the attachment surfaces **108L** and **108R** of the holding member **107** by bonding or screwing.

A total of four attachment flanges **111LL** and **111LR**, and **111RL** and **111RR** (attachment flanges **111LR** and **111RR** are not shown) are vertically formed at two ends of the openings **110L** and **110R** on the lower side of the attachment surfaces **108L** and **108R**, respectively. The vertical surface **109** has an attachment hole **112** and attachment boss **113** at the upper and lower portions, respectively.

The sculptured surface prisms **103L** and **103R** are formed from e.g., an acrylic resin and have optical characteristics as disclosed in Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 7-104209. A total of four attachment flanges **114LL** and **114LR**, and **114RL** and **114RR** (attachment flanges **114LR** and **114RR** are not shown) are formed integrally with the side surfaces of the sculptured surface prisms **103L** and **103R**, respectively. The sculptured surface prisms **103L** and **103R** are positioned and fixed to the holding member **107** by bonding or screwing while making the attachment flanges

6

114LL, **114LR**, **114RL**, and **114RR** correspond to the attachment flanges **111LL**, **111LR**, **111RL**, and **111RR** of the holding member **107**, respectively.

Electrodes for driving the LCD panels **101L** and **101R** are connected to the electrical circuit board **104** with drive circuits through flexible flat cables **115L** and **115R**, respectively. Each of the flexible flat cables **115L** and **115R** has, e.g., an S shape bent twice such that the LCD panels **101L** and **101R** can be moved in positioning them.

The electrical circuit board **104** is formed from, e.g., a glass epoxy board and has an attachment hole **116** at substantially the central portion. The electrical circuit board **104** is fixed to the attachment boss **113** of the holding member **107** through the attachment hole **116** by a screw. Circuits for displaying video images on the LCD panels **101L** and **101R**, inverter circuits for turning on the backlight units **102L** and **102R**, and power supply circuit are formed on the electrical circuit board **104**. These circuits are connected to a video signal generation means such as a video deck including a video output circuit, signal processing circuit, and power supply circuit through an electrical wire **117** and a connector.

The backlight units **102L** and **102R** are formed from flat tube-type fluorescent backlight units **118L** and **118R** and inverter circuits **119L** and **119R**, respectively. The backlight units **102L** and **102R** are fixed on the LCD panels **101L** and **101R** via a spacer by a known means such as bonding and connected to the electrical circuits on the electrical circuit board **104** through electrical wires **120L** and **120R**, respectively.

The base cover **105** as a cover member has an attachment boss **121** at the center, and openings **122L** and **122R** for left and right eyes are formed on the left and right sides of the attachment boss **121**. The attachment boss **121** has a screw hole at the center. The holding member **107** is fixed to the base cover **105** by screwing the base cover **105** through the attachment hole **112** of the holding member **107**. A damping member such as a rubber bush is inserted between the attachment hole **112** of the holding member **107** and the attachment boss **121** of the base cover **105**, so that the holding member **107** is prevented from being deformed by an external force applied to the base cover **105** to impede a natural view. The base cover **105** and lid cover **106** are fixed by bonding or screwing while a bush **123** attached to the electrical wire **117** is sandwiched between a notch **124** of the base cover **105** and a notch **125** of the lid cover **106** to mechanically fix the electrical wire **117**.

With this arrangement, video images corresponding to video signals from the video output device are displayed on the LCD panels **101L** and **101R**. The video images on the LCD panels **101L** and **101R** illuminated with the backlight units **118L** and **118R** are enlarged through sculptured surface prisms **103L** and **103R** and observed by the user through the openings **122L** and **122R** of the base cover **105**.

Since the image display apparatus of this embodiment has an efficient component arrangement: for example, the electrical circuit board **104** is positioned behind the sculptured surface prisms **103L** and **103R**, as shown in FIG. 5. Hence, the apparatus can be made compact. In assembly, the flexible flat cables **115L** and **115R** have slack and are bent at least once. For this reason, even when the LCD panels **101L** and **101R** move in positioning, the holding member **107** can be prevented from being applied with a force and deformed, and the LCD panels **101L** and **101R** can be prevented from shifting to adversely affect the video image. Since the electrical circuit board **104** is fixed to the holding member

107 at only substantially the central portion, the holding member **107** can be prevented from deforming due to the accuracy of the shape and, more particularly, flatness of the electrical circuit board **104**, so the user can obtain a natural view.

In the third embodiment, the inverter circuits **119L** and **119R** are constructed as the backlight units **102L** and **102R** together with the fluorescent backlight units **118L** and **118R**. However, the inverter circuits **119L** and **119R** may be formed on the electrical circuit board **104**. In this case, to prevent noise, the electrical circuit board **104** and the LCD panels **101L** and **101R** are preferably connected by cables different from those for connecting the fluorescent backlight units **118L** and **118R**.

FIG. 6 is a perspective view of an image display apparatus according to the fourth embodiment, which can be applied to a portable video phone or facsimile viewer. This image display apparatus mainly comprises a transmission LCD panel **130** for a single eye, backlight unit **131**, and sculptured surface prism **132**. These members are accommodated in cover members, i.e., a base cover **134** and lid cover **135** together with an electrical circuit board **133**.

A holding member **136** of this embodiment is also formed from, e.g., a polycarbonate resin. The holding member **136** has an opening **137**, LCD attachment surface **138**, attachment holes **139L** and **139R**, and attachment flanges **140L** and **140R**. The sculptured surface prism **132** is the same as in the third embodiment and has left and right attachment screw holes in the surface opposing the LCD panel **130** outside the range where effective light passes through. When screws **141L** and **141R** are driven into the screw holes through the attachment holes **139L** and **139R** of the holding member **136**, the sculptured surface prism **132** is fixed on the lower side of the holding member **136**.

The LCD panel **130** is fixed on the LCD attachment surface **138** of the holding member **136** by bonding or screwing such that a predetermined relationship holds between the LCD panel **130** and sculptured surface prism **132**, and the display portion is positioned within the range of the opening **137** of the holding member **136**. An electrode for driving the LCD panel **130** is connected to the electrical circuit board **133** having an attachment hole **143**, on which the drive circuit is formed, through a flexible flat cable **142**.

The electrical circuit board **133** is connected to a video signal generation means through an electrical wire **144** and connector. The backlight unit **131** is formed from a fluorescent backlight unit **145** and inverter circuit **146**. The backlight unit **131** is fixed to the LCD panel **130** via a spacer by a known means such as bonding, and also connected to the electrical circuit board **133** through an electrical wire **147**.

The base cover **134** has an opening **148** and attachment bosses **149L** and **149R**. The attachment bosses **149L** and **149R** have screw holes at their centers. When screws are driven into the screw holes through the attachment flanges **140L** and **140R** of the holding member **136**, the holding member **136** is fixed to the base cover **134**.

The lid cover **135** has a board attachment boss **150**. When the board attachment boss **150** is inserted into the attachment hole **143** of the electrical circuit board **133**, and a screw is driven into the screw hole of the board attachment boss **150**, the electrical circuit board **133** is fixed to the lid cover **135**. The lid cover **135** is further fixed to the base cover **134** by a known means such as bonding or screwing. At this time, a bush **151** attached to the electrical wire **144** is sandwiched by notches **152** and **153** of the base cover **134** and lid cover **135**.

With this arrangement, a video signal from the video output device is output to the LCD panel **130**. The video image on the LCD panel **130** illuminated with the backlight unit **131** is enlarged through the sculptured surface prism **132** and observed by one eye of the user who is looking from the opening **148** of the base cover **134**. As described above, when the electrical circuit board **133** is fixed to the top case **135**, the holding member **136** can be prevented from being deformed in fixing the electrical circuit board **133**.

FIG. 7 shows the fifth embodiment in which a single-eye image display apparatus is applied to a portable video phone. A visual unit **156** for displaying an image is connected to a portable telephone main body **155**. More specifically, the image display apparatus shown in FIG. 6 is electrically connected to the portable telephone main body **155** and mechanically fixed. In this case, to cope with the personal difference in head shape between users, the visual unit **156** is preferably fixed such that it can pivot with respect to the portable telephone main body **155** at least in the vertical direction of the screen.

FIG. 8 is a perspective view showing the sixth embodiment. FIG. 9 is a sectional view. An electrical circuit board is formed not from a hard board but from a flexible printed board as part of a flexible flat cable to make the entire apparatus more compact, and this arrangement is applied to an HMD.

The image display apparatus of this embodiment comprises transmission LCD panels **160L** and **160R** for left and right eyes, backlight units **161L** and **161R**, and sculptured surface prisms **162L** and **162R**, as in the third embodiment. An electrical circuit board **163** is formed from the same material as that of a flexible flat cable, e.g., a polyimide resin, and integrated with the flexible flat cable. These members are compactly accommodated in cover members, i.e., a base cover **164** and lid cover **165**, as in the third embodiment. The base cover **164** has an HMD mount portion **166** for mounting the HMD on the head of a user.

A holding member **167** of this embodiment is also formed from, e.g., a polycarbonate resin. The front surface of the holding member **167** corresponds to an attachment surface for attaching the LCDs for left and right eyes, and the rear surface corresponds to a flat prism attachment surface for attaching the prisms for left and right eyes. The holding member **167** has openings **168L** and **168R** for left and right eyes. Prism attachment holes **169LL** and **169LR**, and **169RL** and **169RR** are formed on the left and right sides of the openings **168L** and **168R**, respectively. An attachment hole **171** for fixing the holding member **167** to the base cover **164** is formed in a vertical surface **170** at the central portion.

The sculptured surface prisms **162L** and **162R** are formed from, e.g., an acrylic resin and have the same optical characteristics as those of the third embodiment. Attachment surfaces **173L** and **173R** are formed on surfaces of the sculptured surface prisms **162L** and **162R** opposing the LCD panels **160L** and **160R** so as to surround regions **172L** and **172R** where effective light passes through. The attachment surfaces **173L** and **173R** have attachment screw holes **174LL**, **174LR**, **174RL**, and **174RR**, respectively.

The attachment surfaces **173L** and **173R** of the sculptured surface prisms abut against the prism attachment surface of the holding member **167**. When screws **175LL**, **175LR**, **175RL**, and **175RR** (screws **175RL** and **175RR** are not shown) are driven into the screw holes **174LL**, **174LR**, **174RL**, and **174RR** of the sculptured surface prisms **162L** and **162R** through the prism attachment holes **169LL**, **169LR**, **169RL**, and **169RR**, respectively, the sculptured

surface prisms 162L and 162R are fixed to the holding member 167. The position of the prism attachment surface is adjusted such that when the attachment surfaces 173L and 173R of the sculptured surface prisms 162L and 162R abut against the prism attachment surface of the holding member 167, images on the LCD panels 160L and 160R can be seen as if they were separated from the user by, e.g., 2 m.

Also, for the sculptured surface prisms 162L and 162R and holding member 167, a plurality of, e.g., two positioning bosses are formed on the attachment surfaces 173L and 173R (attachment surface 173R is not shown) of the sculptured surface prisms 162L and 162R. Positioning holes corresponding to the bosses are formed in the prism attachment surface of the holding member 167. The bosses are fitted in the positioning holes to position the sculptured surface prisms 162L and 162R in a direction perpendicular to the visual axis and fixed.

The electrical circuit board 163 has expanded portions 176L and 176R functioning as flexible flat cables. Each of the expanded portions 176L and 176R has an S shape bent twice, as shown in FIG. 8, such that the LCD panels 160L and 160R can be moved in positioning them.

The electrical circuit board 163 has attachment holes 177LL, 177LR, 177RL, and 177RR. Circuits for displaying signals from a video signal generation means on the LCD panels 160L and 160R, circuits for turning on the backlight units, and power supply circuit are formed on flat portions 178a and 178b on the electrical circuit board 163. The electrical circuit board 163 is connected to the video signal generation means through an electrical wire 179.

The base cover 164 has openings 180L and 180R and attachment boss 181. The attachment boss 181 is inserted into the attachment hole 171 of the holding member 167 via a damping member such as a rubber bush is inserted, and a screw is driven into the screw hole formed at the center of the attachment boss 181, thereby fixing the holding member 167 to the base cover 164.

The lid cover 165 has four dowels 182LL, 182LR, 182RL, and 182RR (dowels 182RL and 182RR are not shown) for positioning and fixing the electrical circuit board 163. In assembling the apparatus, the dowels 182LL, 182LR, 182RL, and 182RR are fitted in the four attachment holes 177LL, 177LR, 177RL, and 177RR of the electrical circuit board 163, respectively, as shown in FIG. 9, to fix the electrical circuit board 163 to the lid cover 165.

When the interval between the dowels 182LL, 182LR, 182RL, and 182RR formed in the vertical direction with respect to the line of sight is made smaller than that between the corresponding holes on the electrical circuit board 163 by a predetermined amount, the electrical circuit board 163 can be fixed to the lid cover 165 by the elastic force generated in the electrical circuit board 163. The lid cover 165 is fixed to the lid cover 165 by a known means such as bonding or screwing. The electrical wire 179 is fixed while a bush 183 is sandwiched between the notch of the base cover 164 and notch of the lid cover 165.

The HMD mount portion 166 is attached to the base cover 164 via an HMD mount portion attachment portion 184. The HMD mount portion 166 comprises a front frame 185, left and right side frames 186L and 186R, front pad 187, and left and right hinges 188L and 188R. In the non-use state, the HMD mount portion 166 can be retracted by folding the left and right side frames 186L and 186R at the left and right hinges 188L and 188R.

With this arrangement, the user mounts the image display apparatus on the head using the front pad 187 and side

frames 186L and 186R. Video signals are output from the video output device to the LCD panels 160L and 160R. Images on the LCD panels 160L and 160R illuminated with the backlight units 161L and 161R are enlarged through the sculptured surface prisms 162L and 162R and observed by the user through the openings 180L and 180R.

As described above, by fixing the sculptured surface prisms 162L and 162R to the holding member 167 and fixing the LCD panels 160L and 160R to the holding member 167, dust can be prevented from entering the LCD panels 160L and 160R or surfaces of the sculptured surface prisms 162L and 162R opposing the LCD panels 160L and 160R. When a high optical magnification is set, a gap between the attachment surfaces 173L and 173R of the sculptured surface prisms 162L and 162R and holding member 167, a gap between the LCD attachment surface 174 of the holding member 167 and LCD panels 160L and 160R, or a gap at a portion between the holding member 167 for fixing the LCD panels 160L and 160R and LCD panels 160L and 160R, which is not associated with display, is filled with a filler. In this case, small gaps formed depending on the surface states of components can be filled. For this reason, dust can be prevented from entering the gaps or being seen by the user when he/she looks at an image.

Since the electrical circuit board 163 shown in FIG. 9 is set along the inner wall of the lid cover 165 in assembling, the image display apparatus can be made compact. In addition, when the board and flat cables are laid out such that tall electrical components such as integrated circuits are positioned in the space between the sculptured surface prisms 162L and 162R, the apparatus can be made more compact.

FIG. 10 is a perspective view showing an image display apparatus according to the seventh embodiment. This image display apparatus mainly comprises transmission LCD panels 201L and 201R for displaying video images for the left and right eyes of a user, backlight units 202L and 202R for illuminating the LCD panels 201L and 201R, respectively, sculptured surface prisms 203L and 203R for enlarging video images on the LCD panels 201L and 201R and projecting them to left and right eyes, respectively, and an electrical circuit board 204 for controlling the system. These members are compactly accommodated in cover members, i.e., a base cover 205 and lid cover 206 formed from, e.g., an ABS resin.

The LCD panels 201L and 201R and sculptured surface prisms 203L and 203R are supported by a holding member 207 formed from, e.g., a polycarbonate resin. For the holding member 207, attachment surfaces 208L and 208R for attaching the LCD panels 201L and 201R for left and right eyes are coupled by a vertical surface 209. The attachment surfaces 208L and 208R have openings 210L and 210R at their central portions.

The LCD panels 201L and 201R are positioned such that predetermined relationships hold between the LCD panels 201L and 201R and sculptured surface prisms 203L and 203R, respectively, the display portions are positioned in the ranges of the openings 210L and 210R of the holding member 207, and the user can obtain a natural view in observation, and fixed on the attachment surfaces 208L and 208R of the holding member 207 by bonding or screwing.

A total of four attachment flanges 211LL and 211LR, and 211RL and 211RR (attachment flanges 211LR and 211RR are not shown) are vertically formed at two ends of the openings 210L and 210R on the lower side of the attachment surfaces 208L and 208R, respectively. The vertical surface 209 has an attachment hole 212.

The sculptured surface prisms **203L** and **203R** are formed from, e.g., an acrylic resin and has optical characteristics as disclosed in Japanese Laid-Open Patent Application No. 7-104209. A total of four attachment flanges **213LL** and **213LR**, and **213RL** and **213RR** (attachment flanges **213LR** and **213RR** are not shown) are formed integrally with the side surfaces of the sculptured surface prisms **203L** and **203R**, respectively. The sculptured surface prisms **203L** and **203R** are positioned and fixed to the holding member **207** by bonding or screwing while making the attachment flanges **213LL**, **213LR**, **213RL**, and **213RR** correspond to the attachment flanges **211LL**, **211LR**, **211RL**, and **211RR** of the holding member **207**, respectively.

Electrodes for driving the LCD panels **201L** and **201R** are connected to the electrical circuit board **204** with drive circuits through flexible flat cables **214L** and **214R**, respectively. Each of the flexible flat cables **214L** and **214R** is bent and connected to the electrical circuit board **204** fixed on one side of the holding member **207**.

The electrical circuit board **204** is formed from, e.g., a glass epoxy board and has an attachment hole **215**. The electrical circuit board **204** is fixed to an attachment boss **217** of the holding member **207** through the attachment hole **215** by a screw **216**. Circuits for displaying video images on the LCD panels **201L** and **201R**, circuits for turning on the backlight units **202L** and **202R**, and power supply circuit are formed on the electrical circuit board **204**. These circuits are connected to a video signal generation means such as a video deck including a video output circuit, signal processing circuit, and power supply circuit through an electrical wire **218** and a connector.

The backlight units **202L** and **202R** comprise flat tube-type fluorescent backlight units **219L** and **219R** and inverter circuits **220L** and **220R**, respectively. The backlight units **202L** and **202R** are fixed on the LCD panels **201L** and **201R** via a spacer by a known means such as bonding and connected to the electrical circuits on the electrical circuit board **204** through electrical wires **221L** and **221R**, respectively.

The base cover **205** as a cover member has an attachment boss **222** at the center, and openings **223L** and **223R** for left and right eyes are formed on the left and right sides of the attachment boss **222**. The attachment boss **222** has a screw hole at the center. The holding member **207** is fixed to the base cover **205** by screwing the base cover **205** through the attachment hole **212** of the holding member **207**. A damping member such as a rubber bush is inserted between the attachment hole **212** of the holding member **207** and the attachment boss **222** of the base cover **205**, so that the holding member **207** is prevented from being deformed by an external force applied to the base cover **205** to impede a natural view. The base cover **205** and lid cover **206** are fixed by bonding or screwing while a bush **224** attached to the electrical wire **218** is sandwiched between a notch **225** of the base cover **205** and a notch **225** of the lid cover **206**.

With this arrangement, video images corresponding to video signals from the video output device are displayed on the LCD panels **201L** and **201R**. The video images on the LCD panels **201L** and **201R** illuminated with the backlight units **219L** and **219R** are enlarged through sculptured surface prisms **203L** and **203R** and observed by the user through the openings **223L** and **223R** of the base cover **205**.

Since the component arrangement is efficient: for example, the electrical circuit board **204** is positioned on one side of the sculptured surface prisms **203L** and **203R**. Hence, the apparatus can be made compact. In assembly, the LCD

panels **201L** and **201R** and electrical circuit board **204** are separated by the flexible flat cables **214L** and **214R**. For this reason, even when the LCD panels **201L** and **201R** move in positioning, the holding member **207** can be prevented from being applied with a force and deformed, and the LCD panels **201L** and **201R** can be prevented from shifting to adversely affect the video image. Since the electrical circuit board **204** is fixed to the side surface of the holding member **207**, the holding member **207** can be prevented from deforming due to the shape and, more particularly, flatness of the electrical circuit board **204**, so the user can obtain a natural view.

In this embodiment, the inverter circuits **220L** and **220R** are constructed as the backlight units **202L** and **202R** together with the fluorescent backlight units **219L** and **219R**. However, the inverter circuits **220L** and **220R** may be formed on the electrical circuit board **204**. In this case, to prevent noise, the electrical circuit board **204** and the LCD panels **201L** and **201R** are preferably connected by cables different from those for connecting the fluorescent backlight units **219L** and **219R**.

In addition, in this embodiment, one electrical circuit board **204** having circuits for displaying video images on the left and right LCD panels **201L** and **201R** is disposed on one side of the image display apparatus. However, two electrical circuit boards **204** may be arranged on the left and right sides, respectively. Especially, when the scale of the electrical circuit board **204** is large, this arrangement can be employed to improve the portability of the image display apparatus.

In the seventh embodiment, fitting properties as an HMD have not been mentioned. When a mount unit as disclosed in Japanese Patent Application No. 10-14972 by the present applicant is attached to the base cover **205**, a compact apparatus as an HMD excellent in portability can be obtained.

In the image display apparatus of each of above embodiments, sculptured surface prisms are used as an optical system, an electrical circuit board is arranged on one side of the sculptured surface prisms, and the electrical circuit board and display elements are connected through flexible flat cables. With this arrangement, a compact apparatus excellent in portability can be realized.

When sculptured surface prisms for left and right eyes are used, an electrical circuit board is arranged on one side of the sculptured surface prisms, and the electrical circuit board and display elements for left and right eyes are connected through flexible flat cables, the visual axis can be prevented from shifting in the vertical direction due to bend of the flexible flat cables in assembling to adversely affect the optical condition. Hence, a safety, comfortable, and natural binocular can be realized.

What is claimed is:

1. An image display apparatus comprising:
a display element displaying a video image;
a light source illuminating said display element;
a free-form surface prism guiding light of the video image from said display element, said free-form surface prism enlarging the video image on said display element and presenting the video image to an observer, said free-form surface prism having an incidence surface of which the light of the video image from said display element is incident, said incidence surface being tilted with respect to a visual axis toward the observer by a predetermined angle;
a holding member supporting said display element and said free-form surface prism; and

13

an electrical circuit board driving said display element, wherein said electrical circuit board and said display element are separated from each other but are electrically connected, and said electrical circuit board is arranged behind said display element, behind said free-form surface prism when viewed from the observer, or on at least one side of said free-form surface prism when viewed from the observer.

2. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said electrical circuit board and said display element are electrically connected through a flexible flat cable bent at least once.

3. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said electrical circuit board is fixed to said holding member at one portion.

4. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said apparatus further comprises a cover, and said electrical circuit board is fixed to said cover.

5. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said electrical circuit board is fixed to at least one side surface of said holding member.

6. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said apparatus is electrically connected and mechanically attached to a portable telephone main body.

7. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said light source is a backlight source which is fixed to a rear surface of said display element, and said electrical circuit board is set on a side of said backlight source opposite to said display element.

8. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said display element comprises a liquid crystal display element.

9. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said electrical circuit board comprises a flexible printed board.

10. An apparatus according to claim 1, wherein said electrical circuit board and said display element are electrically connected through a flexible flat cable, and a central position of said flexible flat cable on said electrical circuit board substantially matches a central position of said free-form surface prism.

11. An image display apparatus comprising:
 two display elements displaying video images corresponding to left and right eyes, respectively;
 two light sources illuminating said two display elements, respectively;
 two free-form surface prisms guiding lights of the video images from said two display elements to the left and right eyes, respectively, said free-form surface prisms enlarging the video images on said two display elements and presenting the video images to an observer, said two free-form surface prisms having incidence surfaces on which the lights of the video images from the corresponding display elements are incident, each of said incidence surfaces being tilted with respect to a visual axis toward the observer by a predetermined angle;
 a holding member supporting said two display elements and said two free-form surface prisms; and
 at least one electrical circuit board driving said two display elements,
 wherein said electrical circuit board and said display elements are separated from each other but are electrically connected, and said electrical circuit board is

14

arranged behind said display elements, behind said free-form surface prisms when viewed from the observer, or on at least one side of said free-form surface prisms when viewed from the observer.

12. An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said electrical circuit board and said display elements are electrically connected through flexible flat cables bent at least once.

13. An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said electrical circuit board is fixed to said holding member at one portion.

14. An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said apparatus further comprises a cover, and said electrical circuit board is fixed to said cover.

15. An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said electrical circuit board comprises one electrical circuit board fixed to a side surface of said holding member.

16. An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said electrical circuit board comprises two electrical circuit boards fixed to two side surfaces of said holding member, respectively.

17. An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said light sources are backlight sources which are fixed to rear surfaces of said display elements, respectively, and said electrical circuit board is set on a side of said backlight sources opposite to said display elements.

18. An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said display elements comprise liquid crystal display elements.

19. An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said electrical circuit board comprises a flexible printed board.

20. An apparatus according to claim 11, wherein said electrical circuit board and said display elements are electrically connected through flexible flat cables, and a central position of said flexible flat cable on said electrical circuit board substantially matches a central position of said free-form surface prism.

21. An image display apparatus comprising:
 a display element displaying a video image;
 a light source illuminating said display element;
 a free-form surface prism guiding light of the video image from said display element, said free-form surface prism enlarging the video image on said display element and presenting the video image to an observer, said free-form surface prism having an incidence surface on which the light of the video image from said display element is incident, said incidence surface being tilted with respect to a visual axis toward the observer by a predetermined angle;
 a holding member supporting said display element and said free-form surface prism, said holding member supporting said display element substantially parallel to said tilted incidence surface of said free-form surface prism; and
 an electrical circuit board driving said display element, wherein said electrical circuit board and said display element are separated from each other but are electrically connected, and said electrical circuit board is arranged substantially parallel to said display element.

22. An apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said electrical circuit board and said display element are electrically connected through a flexible flat cable.

23. An apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said flexible flat cable is bent at least once.

15

24. An apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said electrical circuit board is fixed to said holding member at one portion.

25. An apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said apparatus further comprises a cover, and said electrical circuit board is fixed to said cover.

26. An apparatus according to claim 21, wherein said light source is a backlight source.

27. An image display apparatus comprising:
two display elements displaying video images corresponding to left and right eyes, respectively;
two light sources illuminating said two display elements, respectively;
two free-form surface prisms guiding light of the video images from said two display elements to the left and right eyes, respectively, said free-form surface prisms enlarging the video images on said two display elements and presenting the video images to an observer, said two free-form surface prisms having incidence surfaces on which the lights of the video images from the corresponding display elements are incident, each of said incidence surfaces being tilted with respect to a visual axis toward the observer by a predetermined angle;
a holding member supporting said two display elements and said free-form surface prisms, said holding member supporting each of said display elements substantially parallel to said tilted incidence surface of said corresponding free-form surface prism; and
at least one electrical circuit board driving said two display elements,
wherein said electrical circuit board and said two display elements are separated from each other but are electrically connected, and said electrical circuit board is arranged substantially parallel to said display elements.

28. An apparatus according to claim 27, wherein said electrical circuit board and said display elements are electrically connected through flexible flat cables.

29. An apparatus according to claim 27, wherein said two light sources are two backlight sources.

30. An image display apparatus comprising:
a display element displaying a video image;
a light source illuminating said display element;
a free-form surface prism guiding light of the video image from said display element, said free-form surface prism enlarging the video image on said display element and presenting the video image to an observer, said free-form surface prism having an incidence surface on which the light of the video image from said display element is incident, said incidence surface being tilted with respect to a visual axis toward the observer by a predetermined angle;
a holding member supporting said display element and said free-form surface prism, said holding member supporting said display element substantially parallel to said tilted incidence surface of said free-form surface prism;
an electrical circuit board driving said display element; and
a cover having a portion for observing the light of the video image from said free-form surface prism, said cover covering said display element, said light source, said free-form surface prism, said holding member and said electrical circuit board, wherein

16

said electrical circuit board and said display element are separated from each other but are electrically connected, and said electrical circuit board is disposed between said cover and said display element or between said cover and said free-form surface prism.

31. An apparatus according to claim 30, wherein said portion of said cover for observing the light of the video image is an opening.

32. An image display apparatus comprising:
two display elements displaying video images corresponding to left and right eyes, respectively;
two light sources illuminating said two display elements, respectively;
two free-form surface prisms guiding lights of the video images from said two display elements to the left and right eyes, respectively, said free-form surface prisms enlarging the video images on said two display elements and presenting the video images to an observer, said two free-form surface prisms having incidence surfaces on which the lights of video images from the corresponding display elements are incident, each of said incidence surfaces being tilted with respect to a visual axis toward the observer by a predetermined angle;
a holding member supporting said two display elements and said two free-form surface prisms, said holding member supporting each of said display elements substantially parallel to said tilted incidence surface of the corresponding free-form surface prism;
at least one electrical circuit board driving said two display elements; and
a cover having two portions for observing the lights of the video images from said free-form surface prisms, said cover covering said two display elements, said two light sources, said two free-form surface prisms, said holding member and said electrical circuit board, wherein
said electrical circuit board and said display elements are separated from each other but are electrically connected, and said electrical circuit board is disposed between said cover and said display elements or between said cover and said free-form surface prisms.

33. An apparatus according to claim 32, wherein said portions of said cover for observing the lights of video images are openings.

34. An image display apparatus comprising:
a display element displaying a video image;
a light source illuminating said display element;
a free-form surface prism guiding light of the video image from said display element, said free-form surface prism enlarging the video image on said display element and presenting the video image to an observer, said free-form surface prism having an incidence surface on which the light of the video image from said display element is incident;
an electrical circuit board driving said display element; and
a cover having a portion for observing the light of the video image from said free-form surface prism, said cover covering said display element, said light source, said free-form surface prism, and said electrical circuit board, wherein
said electrical circuit board and said display element are separated from each other but are electrically

17

connected, and said electrical circuit board is disposed between said cover and said display element or between said cover and said free-form surface prism.

35. An image display apparatus comprising:

- a display element displaying a video image;
- a light source illuminating said display element;
- a free-form surface prism guiding light of the video image from said display element, said free-form surface prism enlarging the video image on said display element and presenting the video image to an observer, said free-form surface prism having an incidence surface on which the light of the video image from said display element is incident;
- an electrical circuit board driving said display element;
- a cover having a portion for observing the light of the video image from said free-form surface prism, said cover covering said display element, said light source, said free-form surface prism, and said electrical circuit board; and
- a flexible printed board through which said display element and said electrical circuit board are electrically connected, wherein said electrical circuit board is disposed between said cover and said display element or between said cover and said free-form surface prism, and wherein said flexible printed board is so disposed as to have a configuration corresponding to an outside appearance of said free-form surface prism.

36. An image display apparatus comprising:

- two display elements displaying video images corresponding to left and right eyes, respectively;
- two light sources illuminating said two display elements, respectively;
- two free-form surface prisms guiding light of video images from said two display elements to the left and right eyes, respectively, said free-form surface prisms enlarging the video images on said two display elements and presenting the video images to an observer, said two free-form surface prisms having incidence surfaces on which the light of the video images from the corresponding display elements are incident;
- one or two electrical circuit boards driving said two display elements; and
- a cover having two portions for observing the light of the video images from said free-form surface prisms, said cover covering said display elements, said light sources, said free-form surface prisms and said electrical circuit board, wherein said electrical circuit board and said display elements are separated from each other but are electrically connected, and said electrical circuit board is disposed between said cover and said display elements or between said cover and said free-form surface prisms.

37. A portable phone apparatus having an image display function, comprising:

- a display element displaying a video image;
- a light source illuminating said display element;
- a free-form surface prism guiding light of the video image from said display element, said free-form surface prism enlarging the video image on said display element and presenting the video image to an observer, said free-form surface prism having an incidence surface on which the light of the video image from said display element is incident;

18

- an electrical circuit board driving said display element; and
- a cover having a portion for observing the light of the video image from said free-form surface prism, said cover covering said display element, said light source, said free-form surface prism, and said electrical circuit board, wherein said electrical circuit board and said display element are separated from each other but are electrically connected, and said electrical circuit board is disposed between said cover and said display element or between said cover and said free-form surface prism.

38. A portable phone apparatus having an image display function comprising:

- a display element displaying a video image;
- a light source illuminating said display element;
- a free-form surface prism guiding light of the video image from said display element, said free-form surface prism enlarging the video image on said display element and presenting the video image to an observer, said free-form surface prism having an incidence surface on which the light of the video image from said display element is incident;
- an electrical circuit board driving said display element;
- a cover having a portion for observing the light of the video image from said free-form surface prism, said cover covering said display element, said light source, said free-form surface prism, and said electrical circuit board; and
- a flexible printed board through which said display element and said electrical circuit board are electrically connected, wherein said electrical circuit board is disposed between said cover and said display element or between said cover and said free-form surface prism, and wherein said flexible printed board is so disposed so as to have a configuration corresponding to an outside appearance of said free-form surface prism.

39. A portable apparatus having an image display unit and a portable phone unit to which the image display unit is electrically connected and is mechanically attached, said portable apparatus comprising:

- a display element displaying a video image;
- a light source illuminating said display element;
- a free-form surface prism guiding light of the video image from said display element, said free-form surface prism enlarging the video image on said display element and presenting the video image to an observer, said free-form surface prism having an incidence surface on which the light of the video image from said display element is incident;
- an electrical circuit board driving said display element;
- a cover having a portion for observing the light of the video image from said free-form surface prism, said cover covering said display element, said light source, said free-form surface prism, and said electrical circuit board; and
- a flexible printed board through which said display element and said electrical circuit board are electrically connected, wherein said electrical circuit board is disposed between said cover and said display element or between said cover and said free-form surface prism, and wherein said flexible printed board is so disposed so as to have a

configuration corresponding to an outside appearance of said free-form surface prism.

40. An image display apparatus comprising:

- a display element displaying an image;
- a light source illuminating said display element;
- a free-form surface prism guiding light of the image from said display element, said free-form surface prism enlarging the image on said display element and presenting the image to an observer, said free-form surface prism having an incidence surface on which the light of the image from said display element is incident;
- an electrical circuit board driving said display element; and
- a cover having a portion for observing the light of the image from said free-form surface prism, said cover covering said display element, said light source, said free-form surface prism, and said electrical circuit board, wherein said electrical circuit board and said display element are separated from each other but are electrically connected, and said electrical circuit board is disposed between said cover and said free-form surface prism.

41. An apparatus according to claim **40**, wherein said display element is disposed between said electrical circuit board and said free-form surface prism.

42. An apparatus according to claim **40**, wherein said electrical circuit board is a flexible printed board.

43. An image display apparatus comprising:

- a display element displaying an image;
- a light source illuminating said display element;
- a free-form surface prism guiding light of the image from said display element, said free-form surface prism enlarging the image on said display element and presenting the image to an observer, said free-form surface prism having an incidence surface on which the light of the image from said display element is incident;
- an electrical circuit board driving said display element;
- a cover having a portion for observing the light of the image from said free-form surface prism, said cover covering said display element, said light source, said free-form surface prism, and said electrical circuit board; and
- a flexible printed board through which said display element and said electrical circuit board are electrically connected, wherein said electrical circuit board is disposed between said cover and said free-form surface prism, and wherein said flexible printed board is so disposed as to have a configuration corresponding to an outside appearance of said free-form surface prism.

44. An apparatus according to claim **43**, wherein said display element is disposed between said electrical circuit board and said free-form surface prism.

45. An image display apparatus comprising:

- two display elements displaying images corresponding to left and right eyes, respectively;
- two light sources illuminating said two display elements, respectively;
- two free-form surface prisms guiding light of the images from said display elements to the left and right eyes, respectively, said free-form surface prisms enlarging the images on said display elements and presenting the images to an observer, said free-form surface prisms having incidence surfaces on which the light of the images from the corresponding display elements are incident;

- an electrical circuit board driving said display elements; and
- a cover having two portions for observing the light of the images from said free-form surface prisms, said cover covering said display element, said light sources, said free-form surface prisms, and said electrical circuit board, wherein said electrical circuit board and said display elements are separated from each other but are electrically connected, and said electrical circuit board is disposed between said cover and said free-form surface prisms.

46. An apparatus according to claim **45**, wherein said display element is disposed between said electrical circuit board and said free-form surface prisms.

47. An apparatus according to claim **45**, wherein said electrical circuit board consists of a first electrical circuit board and a second electrical circuit board, and said first electrical circuit board is electrically connected to one of said display elements and said second electrical circuit board is electrically connected to the other of said display elements.

48. A portable phone apparatus having an image display function, comprising:

- a display element displaying an image;
- a light source illuminating said display element;
- a free-form surface prism guiding light of the image from said display element, said free-form surface prism enlarging the image on said display element and presenting the image to an observer, said free-form surface prism having an incidence surface on which the light of the image from said display element is incident;
- an electrical circuit board driving said display element; and
- a cover having a portion for observing the light of the image from said free-form surface prism, said cover covering said display element, said light source, said free-form surface prism, and said electrical circuit board, wherein said electrical circuit board and said display element are separated from each other but are electrically connected, and said electrical circuit board is disposed between said cover and said free-form surface prism.

49. An apparatus according to claim **48**, wherein said display element is disposed between said electrical circuit board and said free-form surface prism.

50. A portable phone apparatus having an image display function, comprising:

- a display element displaying an image;
- a light source illuminating said display element;
- a free-form surface prism guiding light of the image from said display element, said free-form surface prism enlarging the image on said display element and presenting the image to an observer, said free-form surface prism having an incidence surface on which the light of the image from said display element is incident;
- an electrical circuit board driving said display element;
- a cover having a portion for observing the light of the image from said free-form surface prism, said cover covering said display element, said light source, said free-form surface prism, and said electrical circuit board; and
- a flexible printed board through which said display element and said electrical circuit board are electrically connected, wherein

21

said electrical circuit board is disposed between said cover and said free-form surface prism, and wherein said flexible printed board is so disposed as to have a configuration corresponding to an outside appearance of said free-form surface prism.

51. An apparatus according to claim 50, wherein said display element is disposed between said electrical circuit board and said free-form surface prism.

52. A portable apparatus having an image display unit and a portable phone unit to which the image display unit is electrically connected and is mechanically attached, said portable apparatus comprising:

- a display element displaying an image;
- a light source illuminating said display element;
- a free-form surface prism guiding light of the image from said display element, said free-form surface prism enlarging the image on said display element and presenting the image to an observer, said free-form surface prism having an incidence surface on which the light of the image from said display element is incident;

22

an electrical circuit board driving said display element; a cover having a portion for observing the light of the image from said free-form surface prism, said cover covering said display element, said light source, said free-form surface prism, and said electrical circuit board; and

a flexible printed board through which said display element and said electrical circuit board are electrically connected, wherein

said electrical circuit board is disposed between said cover and said free-form surface prism, and wherein said flexible printed board is so disposed as to have a configuration corresponding to an outside appearance of said free-form surface prism.

53. An apparatus according to claim 52, wherein said display element is disposed between said electrical circuit board and said free-form surface prism.

* * * * *

UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE
CERTIFICATE OF CORRECTION

PATENT NO. : 6,515,638 B2
DATED : February 4, 2003
INVENTOR(S) : Tatsuo Chigira et al.

Page 1 of 1

It is certified that error appears in the above-identified patent and that said Letters Patent is hereby corrected as shown below:

Column 4,

Line 34, "and." should read -- and --.

Line 42, "circuit" should read -- circuits --.

Column 5,

Line 17, "image.display" should read -- image display --.

Line 39, "10L" should read -- 110L --.

Column 17,

Line 48, "fee-form" should read -- free-form --.

Column 19,

Line 64, "prims" should read -- prism --.

Column 20,

Line 4, prims," should read -- prism, --.

Signed and Sealed this

Thirtieth Day of September, 2003

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James E. Rogan", with a long horizontal stroke underneath.

JAMES E. ROGAN
Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office