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UNIVERSITY OF
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2001 PAL®

PROGRESS IN AUTOMOBILE LIGHTING

Laboratory of Lighting Technology
September 25-26, 2001

ANIMAL FOUNTAIN BY ANTON LUSSMANN, DARMSTADT

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Content page

Werner Adrian: University of Waterloo, Canada
Visual Acuity and its Dependency on Observation Time and Contrast 1

Yukio Akashi: Lighting Research Center, USA
The effect of oncoming headlight glare on peripheral detection under a mesopic light level 9

Daniel Armbruster: F. Porsche AG, Germany
Motor vehicle signal lamps in a fog environment 23

Gerd Bahnmüller: Automotive Lighting Reutlingen GmbH, Germany
Headlamp Development - Reduced Time to Market 28

Gerhard Bierleutgeb: Hella KG Hueck & Co., Germany
Interior Lighting Control (ILC) System Aspects for a New Approach 35

Werner D. Bockelmann: Ophthalmologist, Germany
Coloured head-down displays (HDD) from the point of view of information transfer 43

Doris Boebel, Automotive Lighting, Germany
Signal Image in PES Systems 49

Christian Boehlau: Hella KG Hueck & Co., Germany
Optical Sensors for AFS – Supplement and Alternative to GPS 56

Gary Brown: Mira, UK
Integrating Pedestrian Impact Protection into Future Headlight Design 61

Berthold Büdel: Audi AG, Germany
Clear lenses for lighting components – The actual trend and its problems 74

John D. Bullough: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, USA
Forward Vehicular Lighting and Inclement Weather Conditions 79

Michael Burg: Hella KG Hueck & Co, Germany
Infrared Headlamps for Active Night-Vision Systems 90

Tso-Wei Chang: Lunghwa Institute of Technology, Taiwan
Driving Performance Analysis on Interactions among Factors of Center High Mounted Stop Lamp and Road Environment 99

Christophe Chenevier: Valeo Lighting Systems, France
Thermal Simulation in Lighting Systems – 5 Days / 5 Degrees 109

Andreas Chudaska: Hella KG Hueck & Co., Germany
Headlamp Cleaning Systems – Trends of Development and Future Demands 119

Sharon Cook: Loughborough University, UK
Warning beacon intensity 127

Content page

Francesco Cortese: St Filippo Neri's Hospital, Italy
Biological and Statistical Profile of Road Accidents Victims in an Urban Area
A One-Year Experience in a Major Hospital 138

Thomas Dahlem: Volkswagen AG, Germany
Physiological Investigation of the Proportioning of Headlamp Illumination 155

Maria Teresa Dalmasso: Automotive Lighting, Italy
Signal LAMPs with hidden light sources 164

Joachim Damasky: Hella KG Hueck & Co., Germany
Trends in Auxiliary Car Lighting and the Influence on OE Development 173

Ad de Visser: Philips Lighting B.V., The Netherlands
Activities of CIE relevant to automotive lighting 186

Detlef Decker: Hella KG Hueck & Co., Germany
Aspects of dynamic light control in automotive applications 196

Christophe Dubosc: Valeo Lighting Systems, France
Lighting Systems and Show Cars 206

Alexis Dubrovin: Valeo Lighting Systems, France
Optimised Lighting Systems Architecture 224

Martin Enders: BMW Group, Germany
Pixel Light 234

Jürgen Ewald: Nippon Carbide Industries B. V., The Netherlands
Visual Performance of Fluorescent Retroreflective Sheeting 240

Frank Ewerhart: Robert Bosch GmbH, Germany
Video Based Curve Light System – Sensor, System and Results 252

Matthias Fiegler: OSRAM GmbH, Germany
PLANON, a mercury-free flat panel light source, with high potential
for automotive applications 266

Michael J. Flannagan: The University of Michigan, USA
Feasibility of Developing a Headlighting Rating System 275

Helmut Frank: Mechatronic, Germany
New Aspects for the Photometric Characterisation
of Microprismatic Retroreflective Sheeting 283

Gianpiero Fusco: Automotive Lighting, Italy
Headlamps Beam Patterns Evaluation by CCD Camera 309

Takashi Futami: Stanley Electric Co.,Ltd., Japan
Development of the "Gatling Beam" Headlamps 316

Content page

Reiner Gödecker: Hella KG Hueck & Co, Germany
Hella introduces MOLIS® - the world's first ,free design' modular lighting system 330

Martin Grimm: Hella KG Hueck & Co., Germany
Improved Nighttime Visibility for Drivers through Dynamic Bend Lighting 339

Martin Grimm: Hella KG Hueck & Co., Germany
ECE Headlamp Performance Status and Potential for Improvement 348

Helmut Haf: IHH Ingenieurdienstleistungen, Germany
SensorLEDIHH – Dual Operational Systemblock to Measure Perceived Brightness and to Simultaneous Adaptive Signal Image Display 355

Michael Hamm: Automotive Lighting, Germany
System Strategies for Adaptive Lighting Systems 368

Michael Hamm: Automotive Lighting, Germany
Headlamp Performance Specification: A Summary of New and Comprehensive Evaluation Methods 381

Takahiro Hara: University Yoto, Japan
Evaluation of AFS from driver's point of view 397

Wolfgang Hendrischk: Hella KG Hueck & Co, Germany
From Xenon, BiXenon to Vario Xenon 403

Henning Hogrefe: Automotive Lighting Reutlingen GmbH, Germany
Headlamp Design with New Double Filament Bulbs 414

Shao Hong: Fudan University, China
The Investigation on Chinese Visual Perception 422

Rainer Huber: OSRAM Opto Seminconductors, Germany
Flexible SMT LED Submodules 441

George Iatan: DBM Reflex Entreprises Inc., Canada
Simulation software for complex reflectors 447

S.E. Jenkins, Optical and Photometric Technology Pty Ltd, Australia
Use and Measurement of LED Clusters for Signals 454

Norbert L. Johnson: 3M Company, U.S.A.
A comparison of Retroreflective Sign Performance in Europe and the United States based on Market Weighted Headlight Data 461

Josef Kalze: Hella KG Hueck & Co., Germany
Situation Adapted Light Distributions for AFS-Headlamps 474

Hiroyuki Kanai: Shinshu University, Japan
Proposition of Road Visual Environment Simulator for Evaluation Visibility of Driver 485

Content page

Takeshi Kimura: Koito Manufacturing Co. Ltd, Japan
Japan's Plan for Introducing ECE Regulations Into Japanese Safety Regulations 503

Nils Knollmann: Audi AG, Germany
Interior lighting concept on the basis of psychological and physiological influences on night-time driving 508

Thomas Knoop: LichtVision GmbH, Germany
Digital Light Measurement for Automobile Applications 520

Shoji Kobayashi: Koito Manufacturing Co. Ltd., Japan
Next Generation Lane Indication/Recognition System, Study of Phase II 522

Toshiyuki Kondo: Stanley Electric Co. Ltd., Japan
Developing Highly Efficient LED Combination Rear Lamps 546

Prasad Koppolu: Visteon Corporation, U.S.A.
Knowledge-Based Engineering Application for Lighting Design and Development – KBE-SmartLite 560

Harald Küster: Alanod Aluminium-Veredlung GmbH & Co. KG, Germany
Large Area Coating of Aluminium Coils for Automotive Applications 577

Peter Lehnert: BMW Technik GmbH, Germany
Disability and Discomfort Glare under dynamic Conditions – The Effect of Glare Stimuli on the Human Vision 582

Yandan Lin: Fudan University, China
Visual Performance at Mesopic Light Levels 593

Thomas Luce: Philips Automotive Lighting, Germany
Optimized Light Source for High Incoupling Efficiencies in Distributive Lighting Systems (DLS) 599

Peter Ludwig, Delphi Automotive Systems, Germany
Wiring Integrated Illumination 612

Karl Manz: Lichttechnisches Institut der Universität Karlsruhe, Germany
The Influence by Size of Headlamp on Discomfort Glare 618

Karl Manz: Lichttechnisches Institut der Universität Karlsruhe, Germany
Tolerances of Cut-Off-Measurements 635

Janusz Mazur: Warsaw University of Technology, Poland
Computer Visualisation into Effect of Lighting Road by Car Projector with Using Programs from Group CAD 646

Stefan Milch: smart microwave sensors GmbH, Germany
Pedestrian Detection with Radar and Computer Vision 657

Content page

Wolfgang Möhl: SCHOTT Glas, Germany
Coating Technology and Materials for Lighting Applications 665

Ulrich Möller: Difa Diemer & Fastenrath GmbH, Germany
Non Dazzling Reading Lamp 679

Kazumoto Morita: National Traffic Safety and Environment Laboratory, Japan
Theoretical Analysis of Effect of Daytime Running Lamps on the Visibility of Automobiles 682

Martin Mühlenberg: Hella KG Hueck & Co., Germany
Vision Sensors and Image Processing – a Contribution to Intelligent Light Function Control 695

Julius Muschaweck: Optics & Energy Concepts, Germany
Constructive design of free-form optical components for illumination 703

Kohei Narisada: Chukyo University, Japan
Role of Adaptation in Perception under Traffic Lighting Conditions 712

Rainer Neumann: Visteon Corp. Europe, Germany
Future Rear Lighting Trends – Safety and Styling Aspects 723

Bernhard Newe: Hella KG Hueck & Co., Germany
Improved Signal Lighting 733

Hiroo Oyama: Stanley Electric Co. Ltd., Japan
The Development of the "Vertical Shape Line-Beam Headlamp" 738

Salvatore Pierro: Automotive Lighting S.p.A., Italy
Plastic Transparent Reflectors for Clear Lens Signal Functions 751

Wilfried Pohl, Bartenbach LichtLabor, Austria
Enhancing Visibility by reducing Glare of Street Luminaires and Headllamps 759

Thomas Reiners: OSRAM GmbH, Germany
Introduction of Optical Features into Light Sources 769

Justin Rennilson: RCS rennilson consulting service, U.S.A.
International Cooperation in Establishing Requirements for Traffic Control Devices 776

Lawrence M. Rice: Guide Corporation, U.S.A.
Predictive Tools for Automotive Lighting 785

Birgit Richter: Reitter & Schefenacker GmbH & Co.KG, Germany
Innovative Tail Lamp Concept Enhances Perceptibility Under Bad Weather Conditions 793

Hartwig Riehl: OSRAM GmbH, Germany
Interference Coatings in Signal Lighting 804

Content **page**

Joachim Ripperger: BMW AG, Germany
Luminance: the Future Photometric for Rear- and Brake-lights 810

Ernst-Olaf Rosenhahn: Automotive Lighting, Germany
Adaptive Headlamp Systems concerning Adverse Weather: Fog 817

Kåre Rumar: The University of Michigan, U.S.A.
Intensity of High-Beam Headlights 829

Kåre Rumar: VTI Dev, Sweden
Night traffic and the zero vision 849

Arnulf Rupp: Osram GmbH, Germany
Discharge Lamps in Automotive Lighting 859

Torsten Ruths: Hella KG Hueck & Co., Germany
Vehicle signature 871

Luca Sardi: Automotive Lighting, Italy
Light Guides for new Lighting Systems 878

Takashi Sato: Stanley Electric Co. LTD., Japan
The Smart Headlamp System with Variable Low-Beam Pattern 883

Thomas Schnell: The University of Iowa, U.S.A.
The Development of a Nighttime Driver Visibility Model
for ultra-violet activated Pavement Markings 890

Gabriel Schwab: Volkswagen AG, Germany
GEOSim – a Tool for the Development of Adaptive Frontlighting System Control 904

Touichirou Shiozawa: Koito Manufacturing Co. Ltd., Japan
Thermal Air Flow Analysis of an Automotive Headlamp 915

Michael Sivak: The University of Michigan, U.S.A.
Quantitative Comparisons of the Benefits of Applying Adaptive Headlighting
to the Current U.S. and European - Low-Beam Patterns 942

Tomasz Targosinski: Motor Transport Institute, Poland
Analysis of the Properties of the ECE Requirements Concerning Headlights 958

Qifei Tu: The Institute of light sources, Fudan University, China
Perspectives of LED Automotive Signal Lights in China 969

Wout van Bommel: Philips Lighting, The Netherlands
Road Lighting Research: yesterday, today and tomorrow 974

Mark van den Berg: LumiLeds Lighting, The Netherlands
Development of High Brightness LED's for Automotive Applications 987

John van Derlofske: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, U.S.A.
Evaluation of High Intensity Discharge Automotive Forward Lighting 994

Content page

Stephan Völker: Hella KG, Germany
Investigation of the visible range of different types of headlamps 1009

Alexander von Hoffmann: Volkswagen AG, Germany
Analysis of Adaptive Light Distributions with AFSim 1018

Pieter L. Walraven: Em TNO Human Factors, The Netherlands
Required changes in $V_M(\lambda)$ 1030

Herbert Wambsganß: Hella Innenleuchten Systeme GmbH, Germany
Innovations in Lighting Technology in Vehicle Interiors 1035

Takao Watanabe: Koito Manufacturing Co. LTD., Japan
The Research on the Effectiveness of AFS Bending Lamp in Japanese Road Environment 1042

Christine Weber: Reitter & Schefenacker, Germany
Micro controlled LED rear combination lamp with innovative signal configurations 1054

Thomas Weber: Hella KG Hueck & Co., Germany
Virtual Night Drive 1062

Peter Weissleder: Audi AG, Germany
The Demand for Attraction – Styling meets Design 1070

Gösta Werner: Swedish National Testing and Research Institute, Sweden
Conspicuouity of road workers at night and day, experiences of two Swedish studies 1078

Wei Xu: Institute of Electric Light Sources, Fudan University, China
The Measurement of Photometric Parameters of Lamps 1083

Wojciech Żagan: Warsaw University of Technology, Poland
Chosen luminance measurement results of the cars' signal lamps 1088

Jiyong Zhang: Fudan University of Shanghai, China
Computer Simulation of Headlamp Beam Pattern and Its Potential Utilization 1096

Li Zhou: Institute of Light Sources, Fudan University, China
The Monte Carlo Method in Design of Automobile Lighting 1104

Wei Zhou: Fudan University, China
Measurement of the Temperature Distribution on the Filaments of the Automotive Lamps Using the Spectroscopic Method 1110

The Research on the Effectiveness of AFS Bending Lamp in Japanese Road Environment

Takao Watanabe, Noriyuki Nakamura, Naoki Matsumura:
Koito Manufacturing Co. LTD., Japan

1. Introduction

The achievement of good low-beam visibility at low and medium driving speeds is a particularly important task in Japan's general road environment. To examine the effectiveness of AFS bending lamps in achieving this task, we manufactured and tested a prototype AFS (Adaptive Front-lighting System) featuring a modified light distribution below the cutoff line.

2. The Road Environment in Japan

2.1. Road Environment Features

Japan is an island nation with predominantly mountainous geography, and inhabitable regions account for only about 20% of the nation's total land area. Passenger cars are used most frequently for commuting. The principal characteristics of Japan's road environment can be summarized as follows, in relation to commuting routes at night.

No.	Home location	Work location	Road environment	Visibility issue
(1)	Plain region	Plain region	(1) Mainly straight roads & intersections (2) Fair number of road lamps in cities/suburbs (3) Mainly national & prefectural roads	Pedestrian visibility on roads and at intersections Improved by road lamps
(2)	Hilly region	Plain region	(1) Mainly curved roads in hill areas (2) Small number of road lamps in hill areas (3) Mainly prefectural and township roads	Lane visibility on curved roads
Note	In plain big-city areas, commuting is primarily by rail.			

Table 1 Commuting road environment

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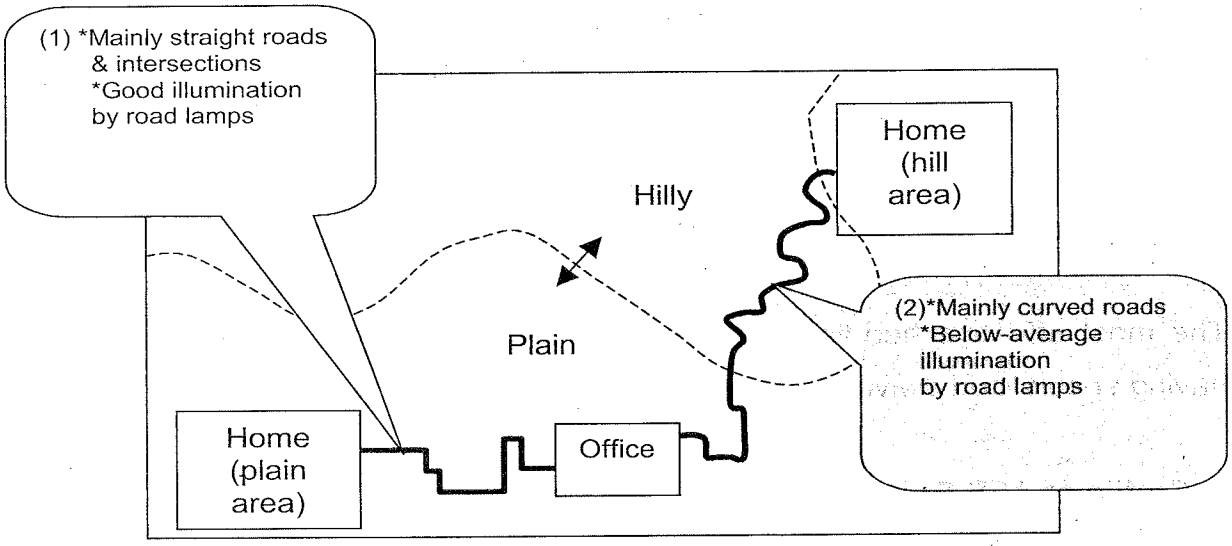

Fig.1 Typical examples of commuting routes in Japan

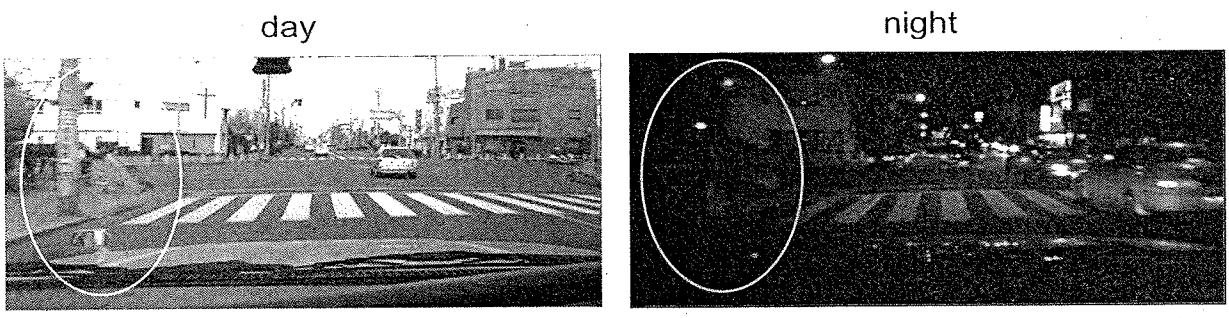

Fig.2 View of a city intersection

Fig.3 Curved prefectural road in suburbs

2.2. Characteristics of Curved Roads (township, prefectural)

(1) Small curvature (R16-40, driving speed of 20-50 km/h)

(2) No more than two lanes

(3) Minimum road lamp illumination at sight-blocking curves

(4) Heavy traffic even at night (i.e., mostly low-beam driving)

The most effective headlamp system under these road conditions is an AFS having specialized swiveling lamps to cover below the cutoff line.

3. Profile of AFS Prototype

3.1. Development Concept

To develop a headlamp system which will provide satisfactory visibility especially for low- to mid-speed cornering.

* "Satisfactory visibility": A sufficiently visible field obtained through light distribution around the driver's eye focus point.

(Photometry for intersections not included as a target of this development.)

3.2. Aim of Light Distribution

3.2.1. Photometric conditions for low/mid-speed cornering

(1) Eye focus on:

a. Center lane marking in case of right cornering

b. Left lane marking in case of left cornering

c. Forward point arriving about 1.5 seconds later

(2) Corner radius and assumed driving speed

	Speed	Radius
Low	20-40	15-40
Medium	40-60 60-80	40-75 75-120
High	80-	120-

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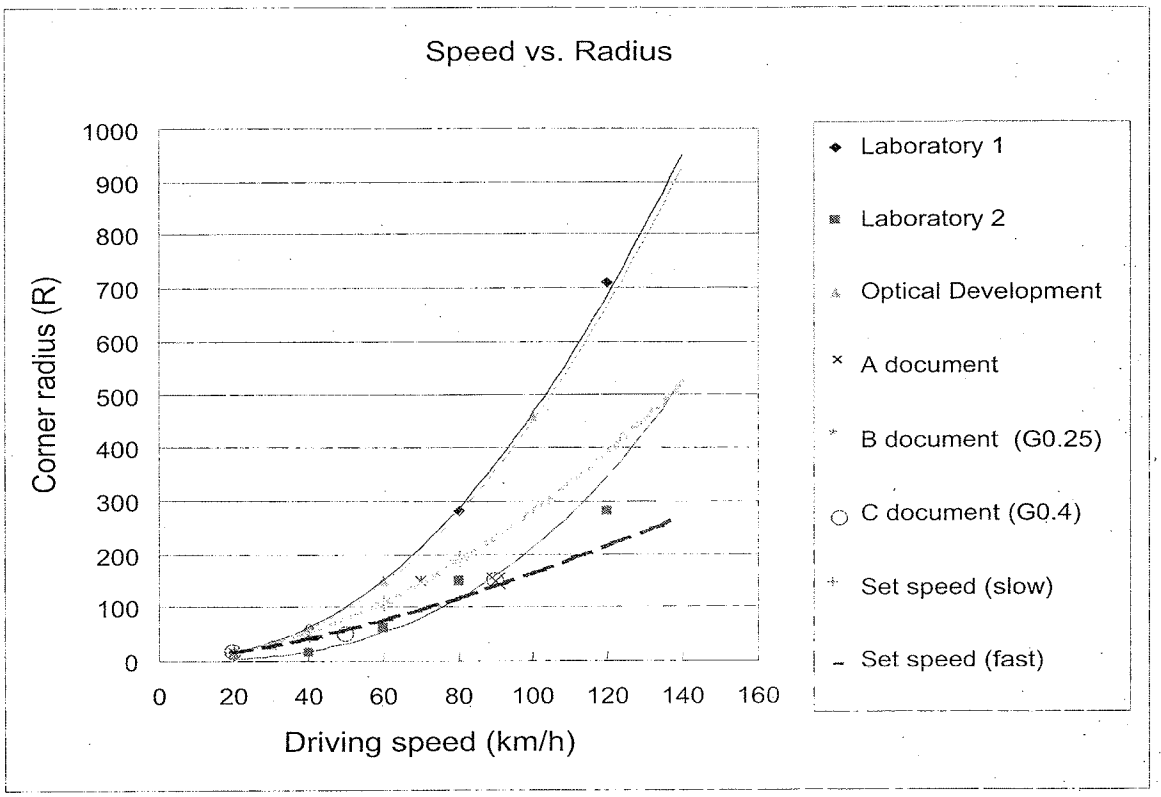
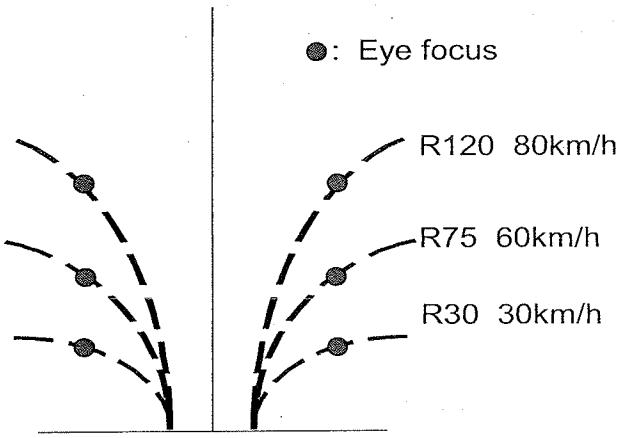


Relation between Radius, Speed, Eye Focus (arriving point 1,5 sec. later)

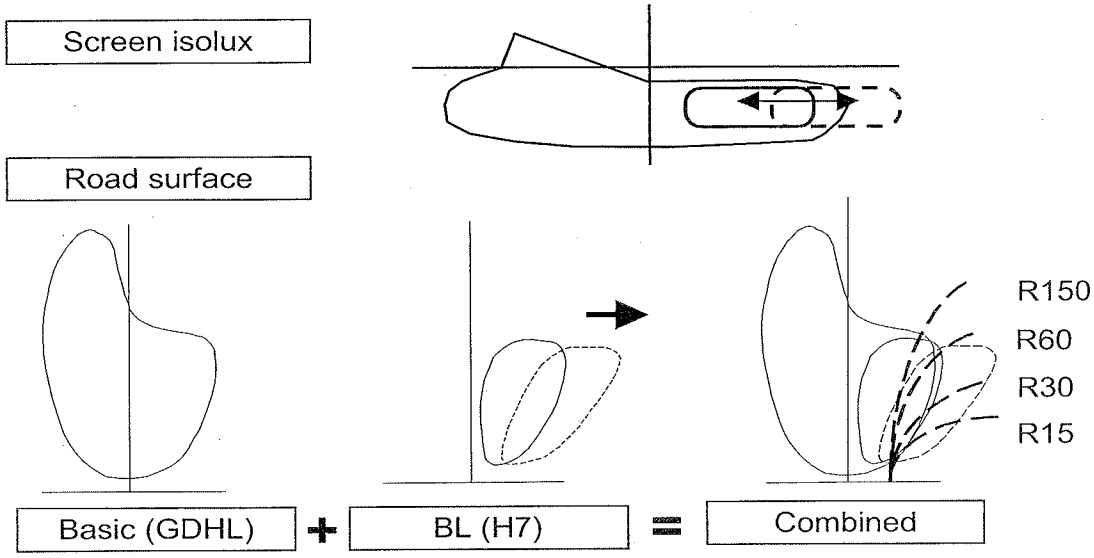


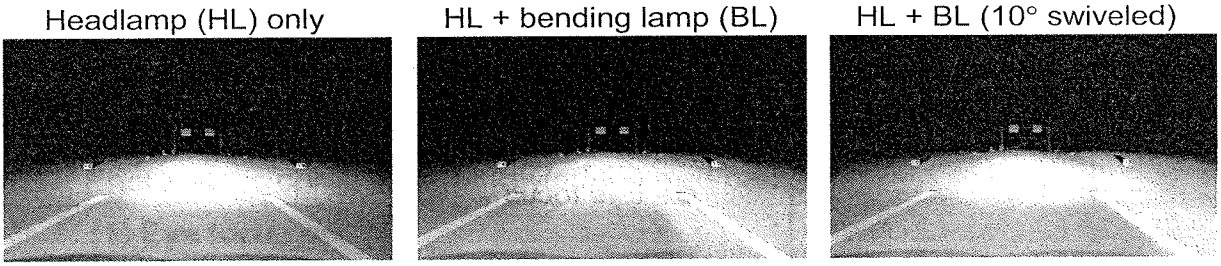
3.2.2. Designed light distribution for low/mid-speed cornering

To ensure an illuminance of 50 lx or more in the eye focus area during low- or mid-speed cornering, we examined the basic light diffusion patterns of gas-discharge headlamps. It was found that, if the diffusion becomes excessive, the far visibility declines and the overall illuminance of the visible field decreases.

To overcome this problem, additional lamps (H7) were introduced to ensure sufficient illuminance by reducing the light diffusion requirement of the

headlamps. Further, by providing a reflector-swiveling capability to the additional lamps, a necessary amount of light was distributed to the eye focus area during cornering.





3.2.3. Construction and control

In our AFS prototype, the ECU functions to turn on/off the bending lamp and to adjust the reflector swivel angle during cornering in response to the input of steering angle and vehicle speed data. Thus the AFS prototype automatically optimizes the light distribution in the eye focus area.

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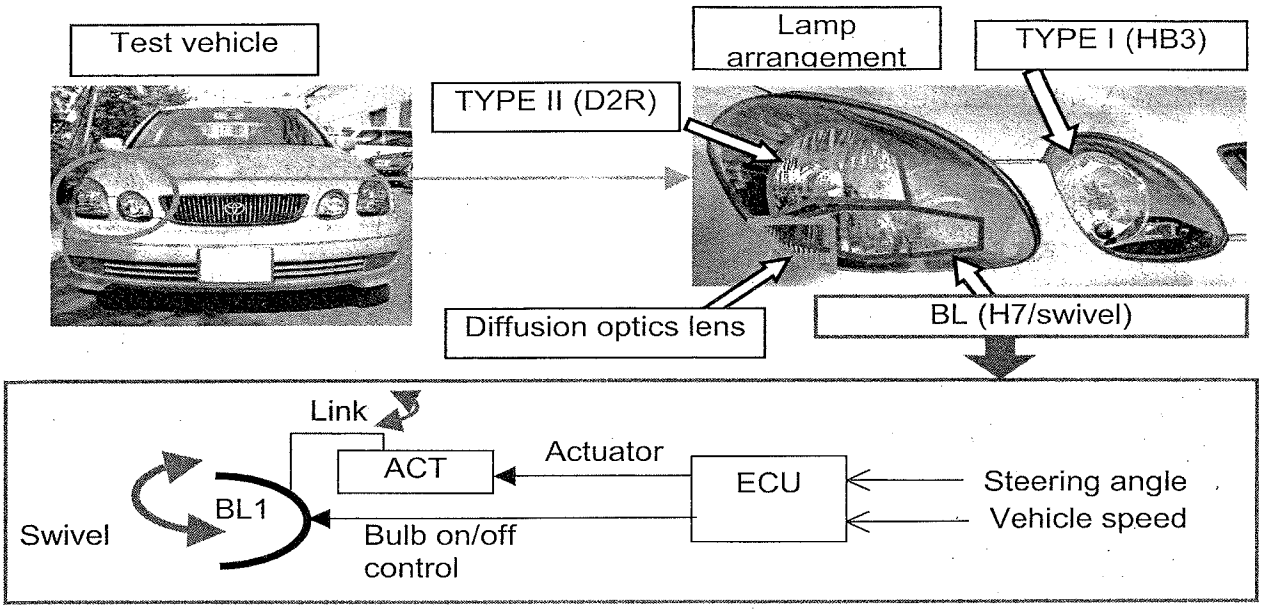

4. Verification of Effectiveness

4.1. Selection of a Test Course

In view of Japan's typical road conditions reported in section 2 and the AFS prototype concept introduced in section 3, possible test courses were investigated around the Koito Shizuoka plant. A section of Prefectural Road 75 located in the Takayama district of Shimizu City was selected for testing.

	No. of lanes	Road width	Curvatures	Road lamps
Typical prefectural roads	2	7-9m	R 20-60	In sight-blocking corners
Takayama section of Pref. Road 75	2	7m	R 16-85	In each corner

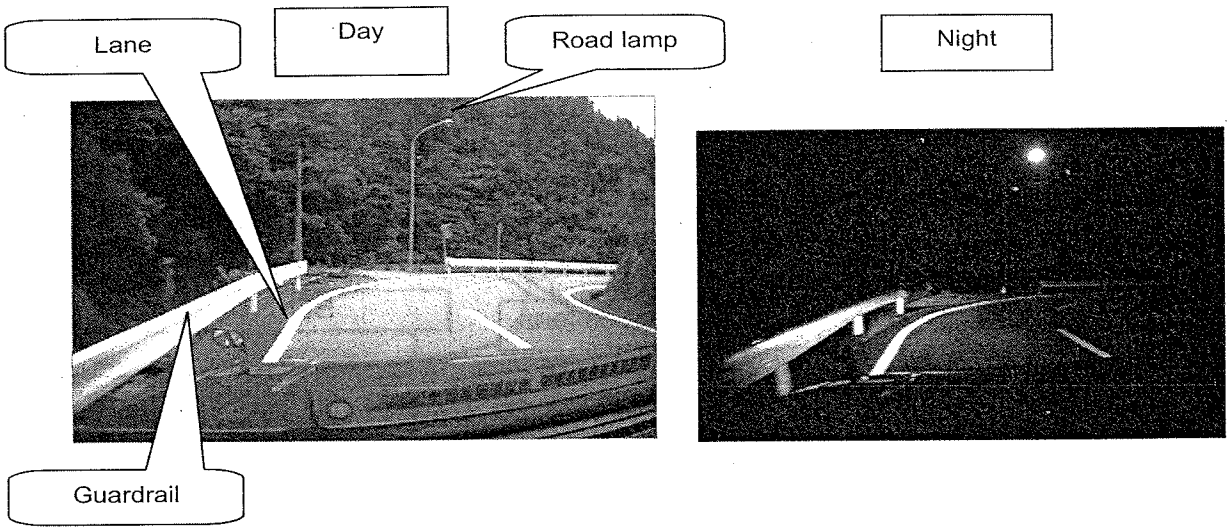

Fig.4 Approach to R16 right corner on test course

4.2. Visibility Rating Method

4.2.1. Perceptual rating by human subjects

(1) Subjects

Five subjects were selected among those having a driving experience of at least five years, normal eyesight, and aged between 20 to 59.

(2) Rating procedures

a. The subjects were conditioned to the test course by driving a conventional (non-AFS) car three round trips along the test course.

b. Five rating targets were set in the test course, where the subject was asked to rate the visibility of those targets during driving operation according to a five-point rating:

5 points: Very good visibility

to

1 point: No visibility at all.

The rating by the subject was recorded by an instructor in the adjacent passenger's seat.

c. Each subject underwent the above rating test two times, using a conventional car and an AFS-equipped car.

d. The rating results were analyzed.

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Rating target		Curvature R (m)	Spped (km/h)	Rated target
1	Mid-speed corner 1 (right)	85	70	center lane marking (long.)
2	Mid-speed corner 2 (left)	85	70	left lane marking (long.)
3	Mid-speed corner 3 (right)	55	60	center lane marking (long.+lat.)
4	Mid-speed corner 4 (left)	55	60	left lane marking (long.+lat.)
5	Low-speed corner 1 (right)	16	35	center lane marking (lat.)
6	Low-speed corner 2 (left)	16	35	left lane marking (lat.)

Note: Long. means "emphasis on longitudinal extension" and lat. means "emphasis on lateral diffusion."

Table 2 Targets in the Visibility Rating Test

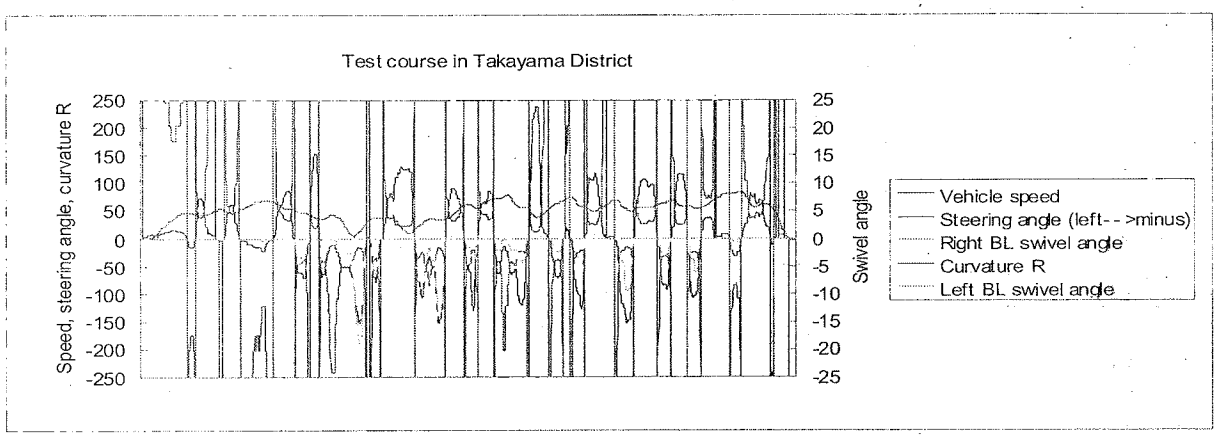


Fig.5 Measurements of curvature R, driving speed, swivel

4.2.2. Quantitative evaluation of eye focus area visibility

(1) Investigation of eye focus position

It was assumed that, during driving, drivers fixate their eyes at a point where the vehicle will arrive in 1.5 seconds later and which varies slightly according to corner curvature and driving speed.

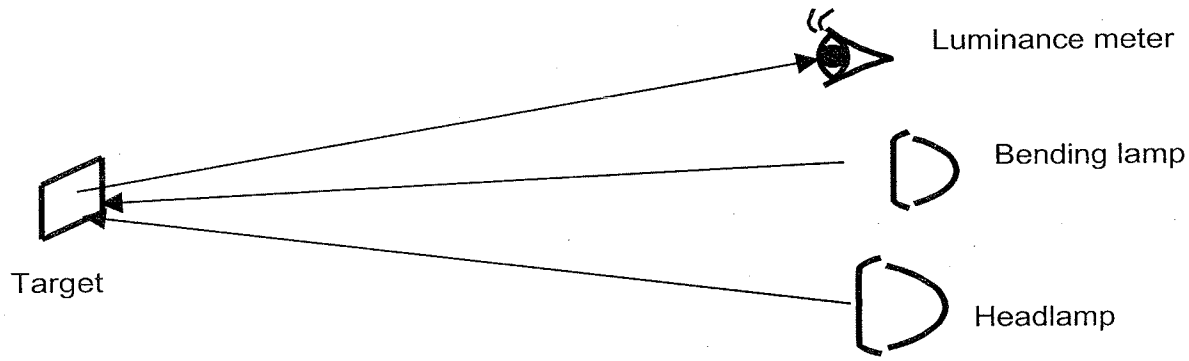
a. Subjects were asked to drive an AFS car both in the day and night and a conventional car in the night. During each driving test, the subject was questioned at the above-mentioned five target locations as to the position of their eye focus.

b. Of the responses from the subjects, the most frequent response was taken as indicating the eye focus position at each of the target locations.

(2) Quantitative data in eye focus areas

a. Measurement of target luminance, background luminance and their contrast

Since it is extremely difficult to measure the luminance of visibility rating targets on a real road for traffic reasons, the measurement was performed in a secluded visibility test ground offering various road curvature conditions. As illustrated below, a target was placed in a setting simulating the positions of the eye, bending lamp and headlamp. Then the luminance values of the target and its background were measured with a luminance meter placed at the eye position.



b. Reflectivity of Target

The target plate, measuring 20 cm by 20 cm and colored gray mat, had a reflectivity of 5%.

4.3. Evaluation Results

4.3.1. Perceptual rating by subjects

The results of visibility rating by the five subjects clearly indicate that the cornering visibility improved by changing from a conventional car to an AFS-equipped car.

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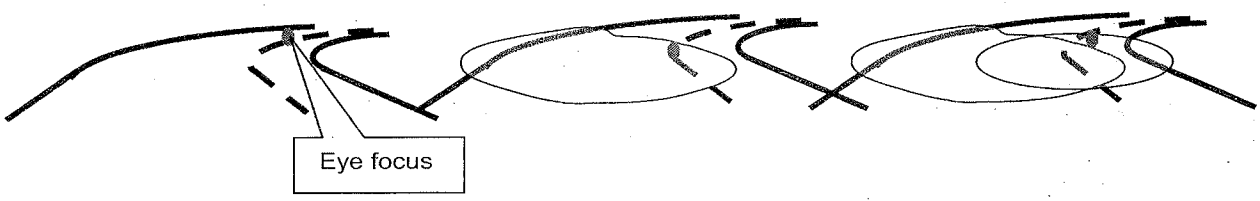
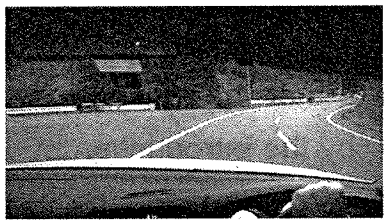
Results of Perceptual Rating

	Rating target	Curvature R (m)	Spped (km/h)	Rating point Conventional car	AFS-equipped car
1	Mid-speed corner 1 (right)	85	70	3	4
2	Mid-speed corner 2 (left)	85	70	3	4
3	Mid-speed corner 3 (right)	55	60	2	3
4	Mid-speed corner 4 (left)	55	60	2	3
5	Low-speed corner 1 (right)	16	35	1	2
6	Low-speed corner 2 (left)	16	35	1	2

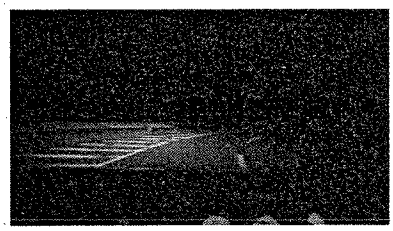
Mid-speed corner 1 image (day) Conventional lighting (night) AFS-lighting (night)

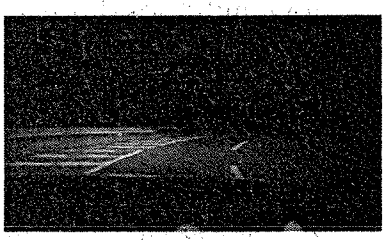


mid-speed corner 1 right

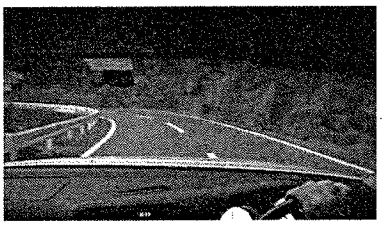


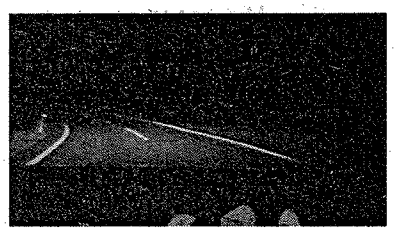
mid-speed corner 3 right





low speed corner 2 left

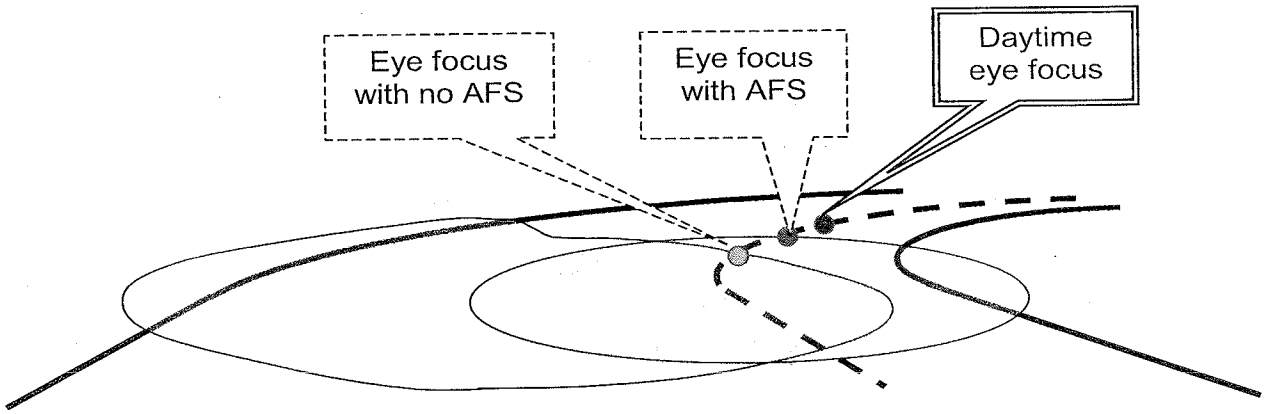




day non-AFS (night) AFS (night)

4.3.2. Quantitative evaluation by luminance contrast

The contrast between the luminance of the target and that of the background was compared between AFS and conventional headlamp systems. The results indicate that the luminance contrast increased in most of the target sites by replacing the conventional headlamp system with our AFS prototype.



4.3.2.1. Luminance contrast at eye focus

As shown in the table below, the results indicate that the luminance contrast value increased 1.5 times to stand at around 1.0 by the introduction of an AFS. Thus we confirmed that the AFS markedly improved the nighttime visibility in low/mid-speed driving.

Rating target		Curvature R (m)	Spped (km/h)	Contrast Non AFS (A)	Contrast AFS (B)	(B)/(A)
1	Mid-speed corner 1 (right)	85	70	0.630	0.933	1.48
2	Mid-speed corner 2 (left)	85	70	0.630	0.962	1.53
3	Mid-speed corner 3 (right)	55	60	0.630	1.005	1.60
4	Mid-speed corner 4 (left)	55	60	0.631	1.027	1.63
5	Low-speed corner 1 (right)	16	35	0.630	0.989	1.57
6	Low-speed corner 2 (left)	16	35	0.630	1.073	1.70

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5. Conclusion

5.1. Perceptual rating by subjects

Visibility improved with an AFS.

As the visible field expanded farther and sideways, the road curve lines became more easily recognizable.

The eye focus moved closer to the daytime eye focus position.

5.2. Quantitative evaluation by luminance measurement

The luminance contrast and road surface illuminance in the eye focus area increased with an AFS

According to the above

Perceptual rating and quantitative evaluation in agreement

5.3. Overall

Under the Japanese traffic environment, Introduction of bending lamps into AFS beneficial for low/mid-speed driving