



DARMSTADT  
UNIVERSITY OF  
TECHNOLOGY



# PROGRESS IN AUTOMOBILE LIGHTING

Laboratory of Lighting Technology

September 25-26, 2001



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| <b>Content</b>                                                                                                   | <b>page</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Werner Adrian: University of Waterloo, Canada</b>                                                             |             |
| Visual Acuity and its Dependency on Observation Time and Contrast                                                | 1           |
| <b>Yukio Akashi: Lighting Research Center, USA</b>                                                               |             |
| The effect of oncoming headlight glare on peripheral detection under a mesopic light level                       | 9           |
| <b>Daniel Armbruster: F. Porsche AG, Germany</b>                                                                 |             |
| Motor vehicle signal lamps in a fog environment                                                                  | 23          |
| <b>Gerd Bahn Müller: Automotive Lighting Reutlingen GmbH, Germany</b>                                            |             |
| Headlamp Development - Reduced Time to Market                                                                    | 28          |
| <b>Gerhard Bierleutgeb: Hella KG Hueck &amp; Co., Germany</b>                                                    |             |
| Interior Lighting Control (ILC) System Aspects for a New Approach                                                | 35          |
| <b>Werner D. Bockelmann: Ophthalmologist, Germany</b>                                                            |             |
| Coloured head-down displays (HDD) from the point of view of information transfer                                 | 43          |
| <b>Doris Boebel, Automotive Lighting, Germany</b>                                                                |             |
| Signal Image in PES Systems                                                                                      | 49          |
| <b>Christian Boehlau: Hella KG Hueck &amp; Co., Germany</b>                                                      |             |
| Optical Sensors for AFS – Supplement and Alternative to GPS                                                      | 56          |
| <b>Gary Brown: Mira, UK</b>                                                                                      |             |
| Integrating Pedestrian Impact Protection into Future Headlight Design                                            | 61          |
| <b>Berthold Büdel: Audi AG, Germany</b>                                                                          |             |
| Clear lenses for lighting components – The actual trend and its problems                                         | 74          |
| <b>John D. Bullough: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, USA</b>                                                   |             |
| Forward Vehicular Lighting and Inclement Weather Conditions                                                      | 79          |
| <b>Michael Burg: Hella KG Hueck &amp; Co, Germany</b>                                                            |             |
| Infrared Headlamps for Active Night-Vision Systems                                                               | 90          |
| <b>Tso-Wei Chang: Lunghwa Institute of Technology, Taiwan</b>                                                    |             |
| Driving Performance Analysis on Interactions among Factors of Center High Mounted Stop Lamp and Road Environment | 99          |
| <b>Christophe Chenevier: Valeo Lighting Systems, France</b>                                                      |             |
| Thermal Simulation in Lighting Systems – 5 Days / 5 Degrees                                                      | 109         |
| <b>Andreas Chudaska: Hella KG Hueck &amp; Co., Germany</b>                                                       |             |
| Headlamp Cleaning Systems – Trends of Development and Future Demands                                             | 119         |
| <b>Sharon Cook: Loughborough University, UK</b>                                                                  |             |
| Warning beacon intensity                                                                                         | 127         |

| <b>Content</b>                                                                                                             | <b>page</b> |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Francesco Cortese: St Filippo Neri's Hospital, Italy</b>                                                                |             |
| Biological and Statistical Profile of Road Accidents Victims in an Urban Area<br>A One-Year Experience in a Major Hospital | 138         |
| <b>Thomas Dahlem: Volkswagen AG, Germany</b>                                                                               |             |
| Physiological Investigation of the Proportioning of Headlamp Illumination                                                  | 155         |
| <b>Maria Teresa Dalmasso: Automotive Lighting, Italy</b>                                                                   |             |
| Signal LAMPs with hidden light sources                                                                                     | 164         |
| <b>Joachim Damasky: Hella KG Hueck &amp; Co., Germany</b>                                                                  |             |
| Trends in Auxiliary Car Lighting and the Influence on OE Development                                                       | 173         |
| <b>Ad de Visser: Philips Lighting B.V., The Netherlands</b>                                                                |             |
| Activities of CIE relevant to automotive lighting                                                                          | 186         |
| <b>Detlef Decker: Hella KG Hueck &amp; Co., Germany</b>                                                                    |             |
| Aspects of dynamic light control in automotive applications                                                                | 196         |
| <b>Christophe Dubosc: Valeo Lighting Systems, France</b>                                                                   |             |
| Lighting Systems and Show Cars                                                                                             | 206         |
| <b>Alexis Dubrovin: Valeo Lighting Systems, France</b>                                                                     |             |
| Optimised Lighting Systems Architecture                                                                                    | 224         |
| <b>Martin Enders: BMW Group, Germany</b>                                                                                   |             |
| Pixel Light                                                                                                                | 234         |
| <b>Jürgen Ewald: Nippon Carbide Industries B. V., The Netherlands</b>                                                      |             |
| Visual Performance of Fluorescent Retroreflective Sheeting                                                                 | 240         |
| <b>Frank Ewerhart: Robert Bosch GmbH, Germany</b>                                                                          |             |
| Video Based Curve Light System – Sensor, System and Results                                                                | 252         |
| <b>Matthias Fiegler: OSRAM GmbH, Germany</b>                                                                               |             |
| PLANON, a mercury-free flat panel light source, with high potential<br>for automotive applications                         | 266         |
| <b>Michael J. Flannagan: The University of Michigan, USA</b>                                                               |             |
| Feasibility of Developing a Headlighting Rating System                                                                     | 275         |
| <b>Helmut Frank: Mechatronic, Germany</b>                                                                                  |             |
| New Aspects for the Photometric Characterisation<br>of Microprismatic Retroreflective Sheeting                             | 283         |
| <b>Gianpiero Fusco: Automotive Lighting, Italy</b>                                                                         |             |
| Headlamps Beam Patterns Evaluation by CCD Camera                                                                           | 309         |
| <b>Takashi Futami: Stanley Electric Co.,Ltd., Japan</b>                                                                    |             |
| Development of the "Gatling Beam" Headlamps                                                                                | 316         |

| Content                                                                                                                          | page |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| <b>Reiner Gödecker: Hella KG Hueck &amp; Co, Germany</b>                                                                         |      |
| Hella introduces MOLIS® -<br>the world's first 'free design' modular lighting system                                             | 330  |
| <b>Martin Grimm: Hella KG Hueck &amp; Co., Germany</b>                                                                           |      |
| Improved Nighttime Visibility for Drivers through Dynamic Bend Lighting                                                          | 339  |
| <b>Martin Grimm: Hella KG Hueck &amp; Co., Germany</b>                                                                           |      |
| ECE Headlamp Performance Status and Potential for Improvement                                                                    | 348  |
| <b>Helmut Haf: IHH Ingenieurdienstleistungen, Germany</b>                                                                        |      |
| SensorLEDIHH – Dual Operational Systemblock to Measure Perceived<br>Brightness and to Simultaneous Adaptive Signal Image Display | 355  |
| <b>Michael Hamm: Automotive Lighting, Germany</b>                                                                                |      |
| System Strategies for Adaptive Lighting Systems                                                                                  | 368  |
| <b>Michael Hamm: Automotive Lighting, Germany</b>                                                                                |      |
| Headlamp Performance Specification:<br>A Summary of New and Comprehensive Evaluation Methods                                     | 381  |
| <b>Takahiro Hara: University Yoto, Japan</b>                                                                                     |      |
| Evaluation of AFS from driver's point of view                                                                                    | 397  |
| <b>Wolfgang Hendrischk: Hella KG Hueck &amp; Co, Germany</b>                                                                     |      |
| From Xenon, BiXenon to Vario Xenon                                                                                               | 403  |
| <b>Henning Hogrefe: Automotive Lighting Reutlingen GmbH, Germany</b>                                                             |      |
| Headlamp Design with New Double Filament Bulbs                                                                                   | 414  |
| <b>Shao Hong: Fudan University, China</b>                                                                                        |      |
| The Investigation on Chinese Visual Perception                                                                                   | 422  |
| <b>Rainer Huber: OSRAM Opto Semiconductors, Germany</b>                                                                          |      |
| Flexible SMT LED Submodules                                                                                                      | 441  |
| <b>George Iatan: DBM Reflex Entreprises Inc., Canada</b>                                                                         |      |
| Simulation software for complex reflectors                                                                                       | 447  |
| <b>S.E. Jenkins, Optical and Photometric Technology Pty Ltd, Australia</b>                                                       |      |
| Use and Measurement of LED Clusters for Signals                                                                                  | 454  |
| <b>Norbert L. Johnson: 3M Company, U.S.A.</b>                                                                                    |      |
| A comparison of Retroreflective Sign Performance in Europe and<br>the United States based on Market Weighted Headlight Data      | 461  |
| <b>Josef Kalze: Hella KG Hueck &amp; Co., Germany</b>                                                                            |      |
| Situation Adapted Light Distributions for AFS-Headlamps                                                                          | 474  |
| <b>Hiroyuki Kanai: Shinshu University, Japan</b>                                                                                 |      |
| Proposition of Road Visual Environment Simulator for Evaluation<br>Visibility of Driver                                          | 485  |

| Content                                                                                                    | page |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| <b>Takeshi Kimura: Koito Manufacturing Co. Ltd, Japan</b>                                                  |      |
| Japan's Plan for Introducing ECE Regulations Into Japanese Safety Regulations                              | 503  |
| <b>Nils Knollmann: Audi AG, Germany</b>                                                                    |      |
| Interior lighting concept on the basis of psychological and physiological influences on night-time driving | 508  |
| <b>Thomas Knoop: LichtVision GmbH, Germany</b>                                                             |      |
| Digital Light Measurement for Automobile Applications                                                      | 520  |
| <b>Shoji Kobayashi: Koito Manufacturing Co. Ltd., Japan</b>                                                |      |
| Next Generation Lane Indication/Recognition System, Study of Phase II                                      | 522  |
| <b>Toshiyuki Kondo: Stanley Electric Co. Ltd., Japan</b>                                                   |      |
| Developing Highly Efficient LED Combination Rear Lamps                                                     | 546  |
| <b>Prasad Koppolu: Visteon Corporation, U.S.A.</b>                                                         |      |
| Knowledge-Based Engineering Application for Lighting Design and Development – KBE-SmartLite                | 560  |
| <b>Harald Küster: Alanod Aluminium-Veredlung GmbH &amp; Co. KG, Germany</b>                                |      |
| Large Area Coating of Aluminium Coils for Automotive Applications                                          | 577  |
| <b>Peter Lehnert: BMW Technik GmbH, Germany</b>                                                            |      |
| Disability and Discomfort Glare under dynamic Conditions – The Effect of Glare Stimuli on the Human Vision | 582  |
| <b>Yandan Lin: Fudan University, China</b>                                                                 |      |
| Visual Performance at Mesopic Light Levels                                                                 | 593  |
| <b>Thomas Luce: Philips Automotive Lighting, Germany</b>                                                   |      |
| Optimized Light Source for High Incoupling Efficiencies in Distributive Lighting Systems (DLS)             | 599  |
| <b>Peter Ludwig, Delphi Automotive Systems, Germany</b>                                                    |      |
| Wiring Integrated Illumination                                                                             | 612  |
| <b>Karl Manz: Lichttechnisches Institut der Universität Karlsruhe, Germany</b>                             |      |
| The Influence by Size of Headlamp on Discomfort Glare                                                      | 618  |
| <b>Karl Manz: Lichttechnisches Institut der Universität Karlsruhe, Germany</b>                             |      |
| Tolerances of Cut-Off-Measurements                                                                         | 635  |
| <b>Janusz Mazur: Warsaw University of Technology, Poland</b>                                               |      |
| Computer Visualisation into Effect of Lighting Road by Car Projector with Using Programs from Group CAD    | 646  |
| <b>Stefan Milch: smart microwave sensors GmbH, Germany</b>                                                 |      |
| Pedestrian Detection with Radar and Computer Vision                                                        | 657  |

| <b>Content</b>                                                                                | <b>page</b> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Wolfgang Möhl: SCHOTT Glas, Germany</b>                                                    |             |
| Coating Technology and Materials for Lighting Applications                                    | 665         |
| <b>Ulrich Möller: Difa Diemer &amp; Fastenrath GmbH, Germany</b>                              |             |
| Non Dazzling Reading Lamp                                                                     | 679         |
| <b>Kazumoto Morita: National Traffic Safety and Environment Laboratory, Japan</b>             |             |
| Theoretical Analysis of Effect of Daytime Running Lamps on the Visibility of Automobiles      | 682         |
| <b>Martin Mühlenberg: Hella KG Hueck &amp; Co., Germany</b>                                   |             |
| Vision Sensors and Image Processing –<br>a Contribution to Intelligent Light Function Control | 695         |
| <b>Julius Muschaweck: Optics &amp; Energy Concepts, Germany</b>                               |             |
| Constructive design of free-form optical components for illumination                          | 703         |
| <b>Kohei Narisada: Chukyo University, Japan</b>                                               |             |
| Role of Adaptation in Perception under Traffic Lighting Conditions                            | 712         |
| <b>Rainer Neumann: Visteon Corp. Europe, Germany</b>                                          |             |
| Future Rear Lighting Trends – Safety and Styling Aspects                                      | 723         |
| <b>Bernhard Newe: Hella KG Hueck &amp; Co., Germany</b>                                       |             |
| Improved Signal Lighting                                                                      | 733         |
| <b>Hiroo Oyama: Stanley Electric Co. Ltd., Japan</b>                                          |             |
| The Development of the “Vertical Shape Line-Beam Headlamp”                                    | 738         |
| <b>Salvatore Pierro: Automotive Lighting S.p.A., Italy</b>                                    |             |
| Plastic Transparent Reflectors for Clear Lens Signal Functions                                | 751         |
| <b>Wilfried Pohl, Bartenbach LichtLabor, Austria</b>                                          |             |
| Enhancing Visibility by reducing Glare of Street Luminaires and Headlamps                     | 759         |
| <b>Thomas Reiners: OSRAM GmbH, Germany</b>                                                    |             |
| Introduction of Optical Features into Light Sources                                           | 769         |
| <b>Justin Rennilson: RCS rennilson consulting service, U.S.A.</b>                             |             |
| International Cooperation in Establishing Requirements<br>for Traffic Control Devices         | 776         |
| <b>Lawrence M. Rice: Guide Corporation, U.S.A.</b>                                            |             |
| Predictive Tools for Automotive Lighting                                                      | 785         |
| <b>Birgit Richter: Reitter &amp; Schefenacker GmbH &amp; Co.KG, Germany</b>                   |             |
| Innovative Tail Lamp Concept Enhances Perceptibility<br>Under Bad Weather Conditions          | 793         |
| <b>Hartwig Riehl: OSRAM GmbH, Germany</b>                                                     |             |
| Interference Coatings in Signal Lighting                                                      | 804         |

| <b>Content</b>                                                                                                                     | <b>page</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------|
| <b>Joachim Ripperger: BMW AG, Germany</b>                                                                                          |             |
| Luminance: the Future Photometric for Rear- and Brake-lights                                                                       | 810         |
| <b>Ernst-Olaf Rosenhahn: Automotive Lighting, Germany</b>                                                                          |             |
| Adaptive Headlamp Systems concerning Adverse Weather: Fog                                                                          | 817         |
| <b>Kåre Rumar: The University of Michigan, U.S.A.</b>                                                                              |             |
| Intensity of High-Beam Headlights                                                                                                  | 829         |
| <b>Kåre Rumar: VTI Dev, Sweden</b>                                                                                                 |             |
| Night traffic and the zero vision                                                                                                  | 849         |
| <b>Arnulf Rupp: Osram GmbH, Germany</b>                                                                                            |             |
| Discharge Lamps in Automotive Lighting                                                                                             | 859         |
| <b>Torsten Ruths: Hella KG Hueck &amp; Co., Germany</b>                                                                            |             |
| Vehicle signature                                                                                                                  | 871         |
| <b>Luca Sardi: Automotive Lighting, Italy</b>                                                                                      |             |
| Light Guides for new Lighting Systems                                                                                              | 878         |
| <b>Takashi Sato: Stanley Electric Co. LTD., Japan</b>                                                                              |             |
| The Smart Headlamp System with Variable Low-Beam Pattern                                                                           | 883         |
| <b>Thomas Schnell: The University of Iowa, U.S.A.</b>                                                                              |             |
| The Development of a Nighttime Driver Visibility Model<br>for ultra-violet activated Pavement Markings                             | 890         |
| <b>Gabriel Schwab: Volkswagen AG, Germany</b>                                                                                      |             |
| GEOSim – a Tool for the Development of Adaptive Frontlighting System Control                                                       | 904         |
| <b>Touichirou Shiozawa: Koito Manufacturing Co. Ltd., Japan</b>                                                                    |             |
| Thermal Air Flow Analysis of an Automotive Headlamp                                                                                | 915         |
| <b>Michael Sivak: The University of Michigan, U.S.A.</b>                                                                           |             |
| Quantitative Comparisons of the Benefits of Applying Adaptive Headlighting<br>to the Current U.S. and European - Low-Beam Patterns | 942         |
| <b>Tomasz Targosinski: Motor Transport Institute, Poland</b>                                                                       |             |
| Analysis of the Properties of the ECE Requirements Concerning Headlights                                                           | 958         |
| <b>Qifei Tu: The Institute of light sources, Fudan University, China</b>                                                           |             |
| Perspectives of LED Automotive Signal Lights in China                                                                              | 969         |
| <b>Wout van Bommel: Philips Lighting, The Netherlands</b>                                                                          |             |
| Road Lighting Research: yesterday, today and tomorrow                                                                              | 974         |
| <b>Mark van den Berg: LumiLeds Lighting, The Netherlands</b>                                                                       |             |
| Development of High Brightness LED's for Automotive Applications                                                                   | 987         |
| <b>John van Derlofske: Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, U.S.A.</b>                                                                |             |
| Evaluation of High Intensity Discharge Automotive Forward Lighting                                                                 | 994         |

| Content                                                                                                             | page |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| <b>Stephan Völker: Hella KG, Germany</b>                                                                            |      |
| Investigation of the visible range of different types of headlamps                                                  | 1009 |
| <b>Alexander von Hoffmann: Volkswagen AG, Germany</b>                                                               |      |
| Analysis of Adaptive Light Distributions with AFSim                                                                 | 1018 |
| <b>Pieter L. Walraven: Em TNO Human Factors, The Netherlands</b>                                                    |      |
| Required changes in $V_M(\lambda)$                                                                                  | 1030 |
| <b>Herbert Wambsganß: Hella Innenleuchten Systeme GmbH, Germany</b>                                                 |      |
| Innovations in Lighting Technology in Vehicle Interiors                                                             | 1035 |
| <b>Takao Watanabe: Koito Manufacturing Co. LTD., Japan</b>                                                          |      |
| The Research on the Effectiveness of AFS Bending Lamp in Japanese Road Environment                                  | 1042 |
| <b>Christine Weber: Reitter &amp; Schefenacker, Germany</b>                                                         |      |
| Micro controlled LED rear combination lamp with innovative signal configurations                                    | 1054 |
| <b>Thomas Weber: Hella KG Hueck &amp; Co., Germany</b>                                                              |      |
| Virtual Night Drive                                                                                                 | 1062 |
| <b>Peter Weissleder: Audi AG, Germany</b>                                                                           |      |
| The Demand for Attraction – Styling meets Design                                                                    | 1070 |
| <b>Gösta Werner: Swedish National Testing and Research Institute, Sweden</b>                                        |      |
| Conspicuity of road workers at night and day, experiences of two Swedish studies                                    | 1078 |
| <b>Wei Xu: Institute of Electric Light Sources, Fudan University, China</b>                                         |      |
| The Measurement of Photometric Parameters of Lamps                                                                  | 1083 |
| <b>Wojciech Żagan: Warsaw University of Technology, Poland</b>                                                      |      |
| Chosen luminance measurement results of the cars' signal lamps                                                      | 1088 |
| <b>Jiyong Zhang: Fudan University of Shanghai, China</b>                                                            |      |
| Computer Simulation of Headlamp Beam Pattern and Its Potential Utilization                                          | 1096 |
| <b>Li Zhou: Institute of Light Sources, Fudan University, China</b>                                                 |      |
| The Monte Carlo Method in Design of Automobile Lighting                                                             | 1104 |
| <b>Wei Zhou: Fudan University, China</b>                                                                            |      |
| 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

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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<br>(2) Fair number of road lamps in cities/suburbs<br>(3) Mainly national & prefectural roads | Pedestrian visibility on roads and at intersections<br>Improved by road lamps |
| (2)  | Hilly region                                             | Plain region  | (1) Mainly curved roads in hill areas<br>(2) Small number of road lamps in hill areas<br>(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*

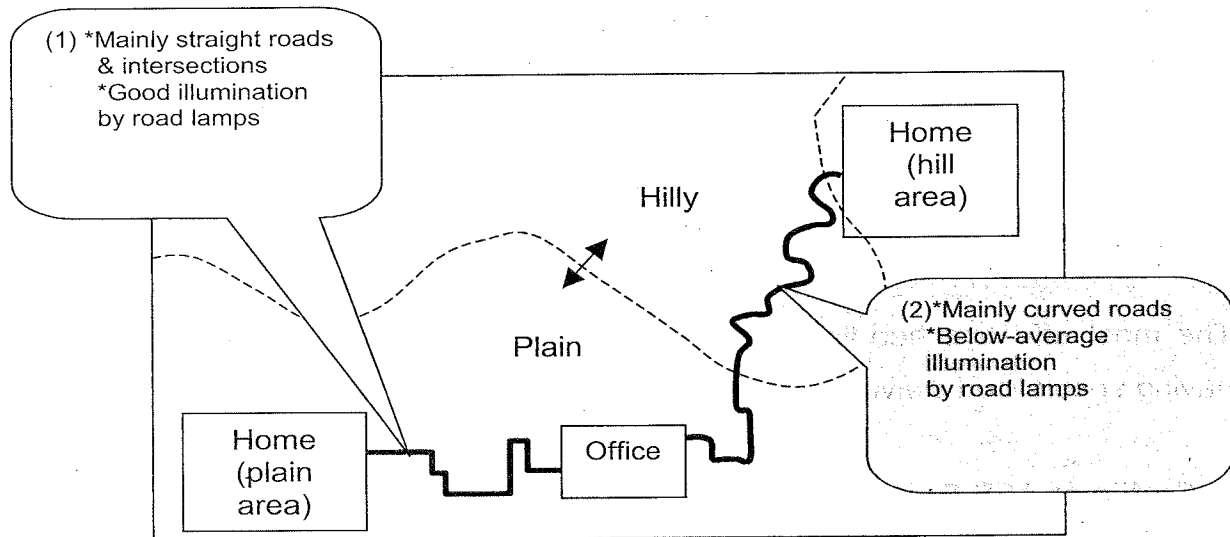


Fig.1 Typical examples of commuting routes in Japan

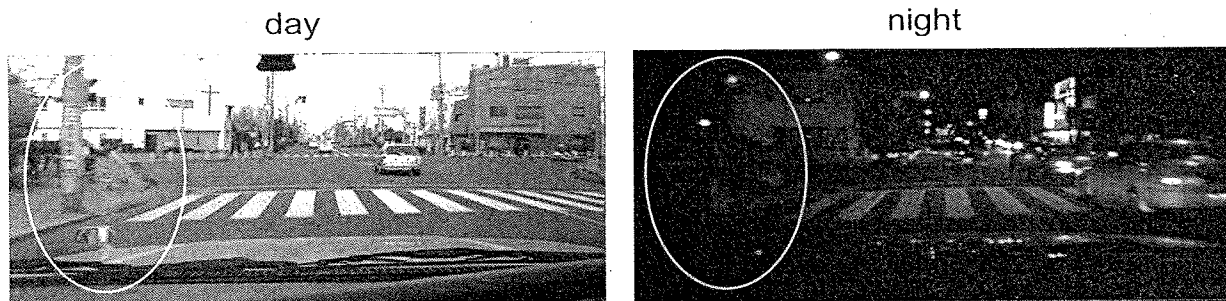


Fig.2 View of a city intersection



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

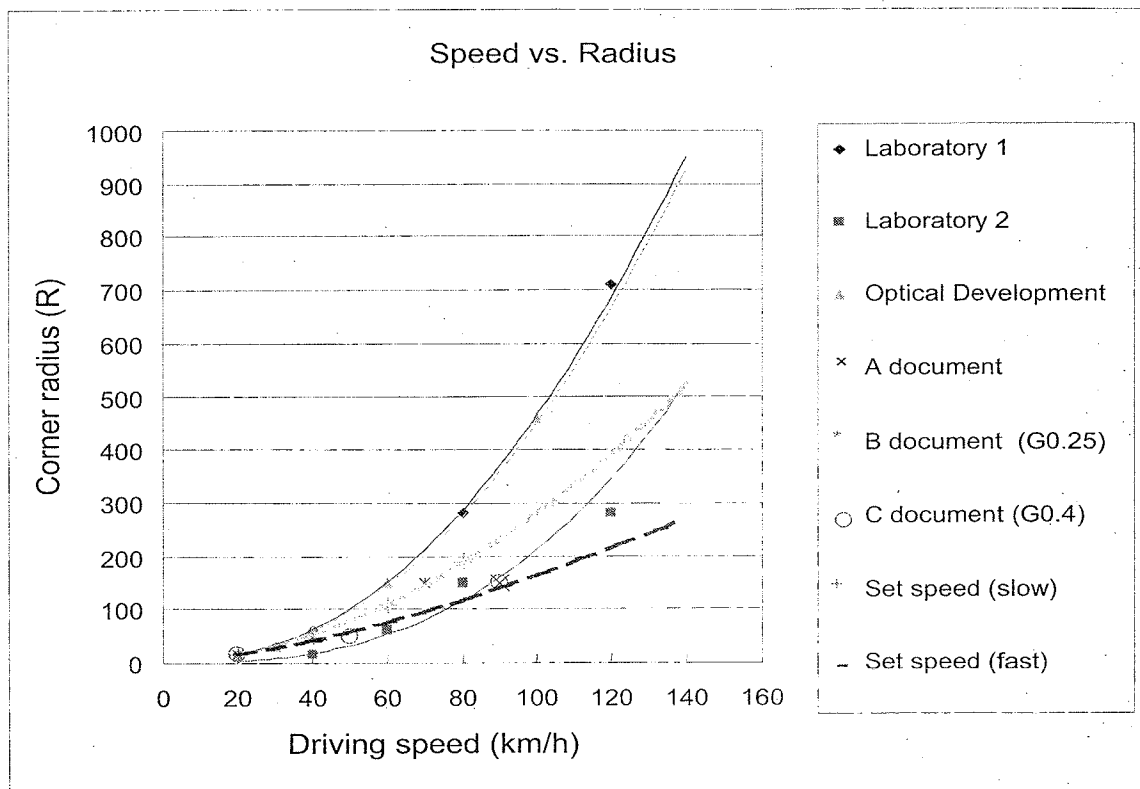
#### 3.2.1. Photometric conditions for low/mid-speed cornering

##### (1) Eye focus on:

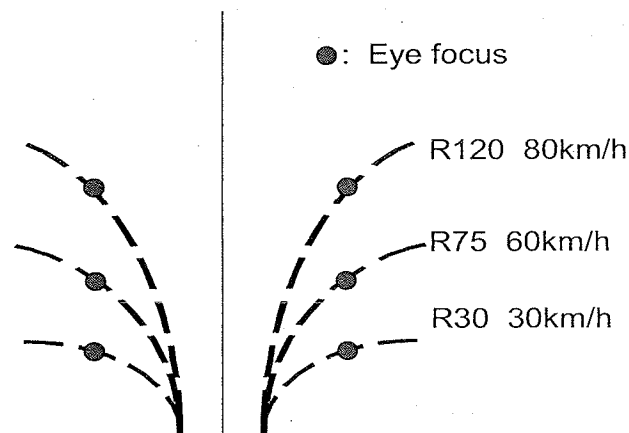
- a. Center lane marking in case of right cornering
- b. Left lane marking in case of left cornering
- c. Forward point arriving about 1.5 seconds later

##### (2) Corner radius and assumed driving speed

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



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

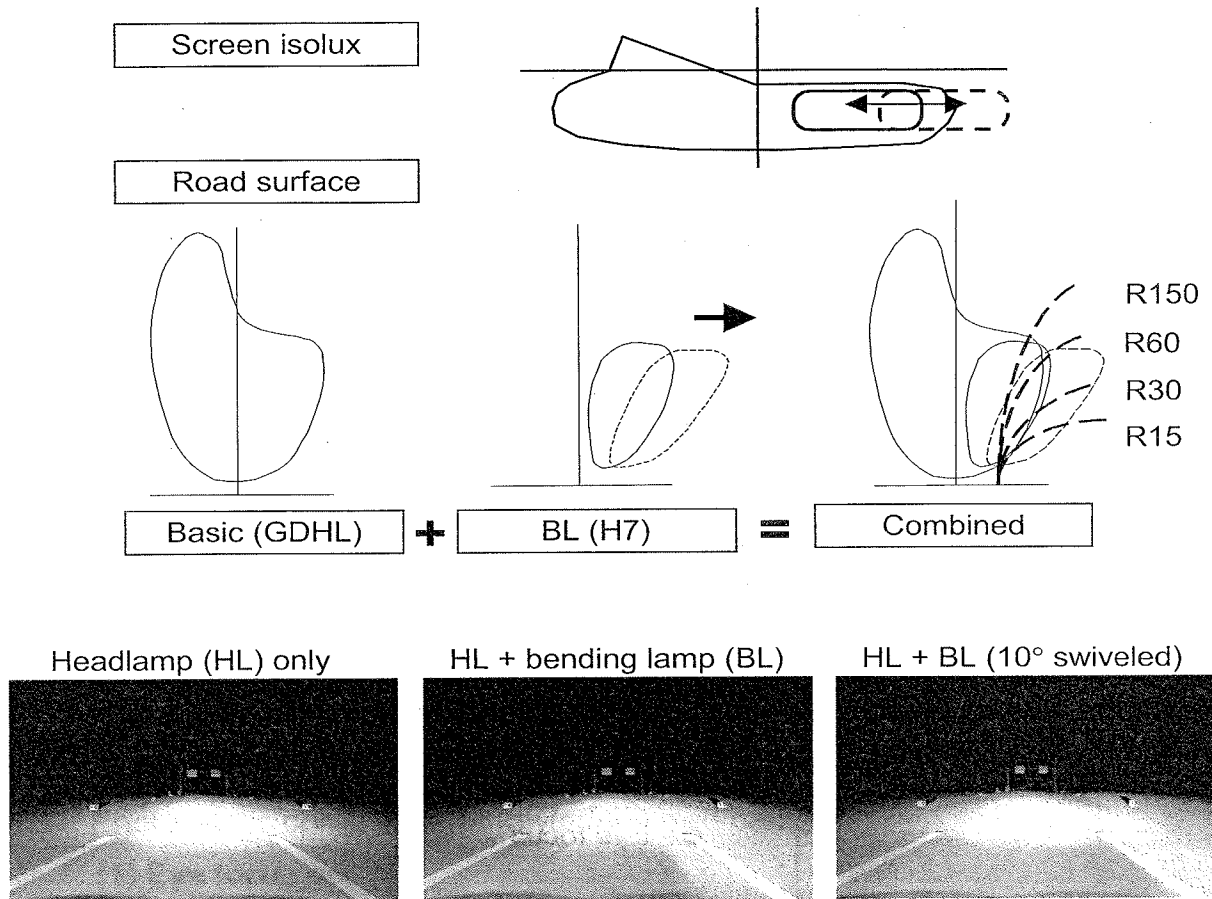


### 3.2.2. Designed light distribution for low/mid-speed cornering

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.

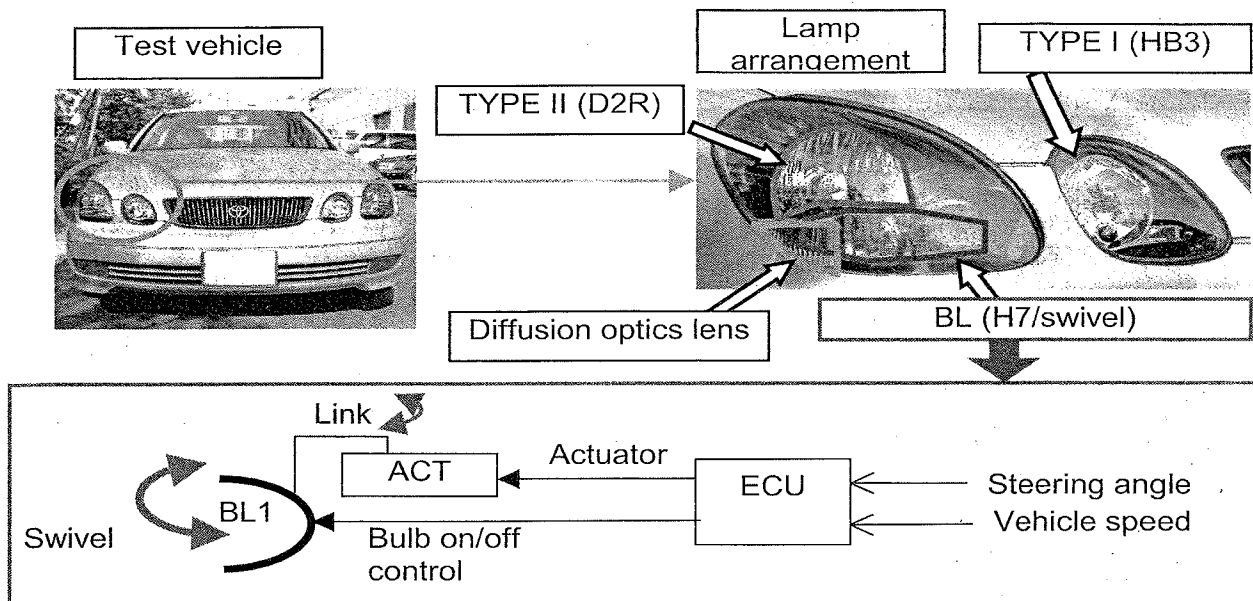
To overcome this problem, additional lamps (H7) were introduced to ensure sufficient illuminance by reducing the light diffusion requirement of the

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.



#### 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            |

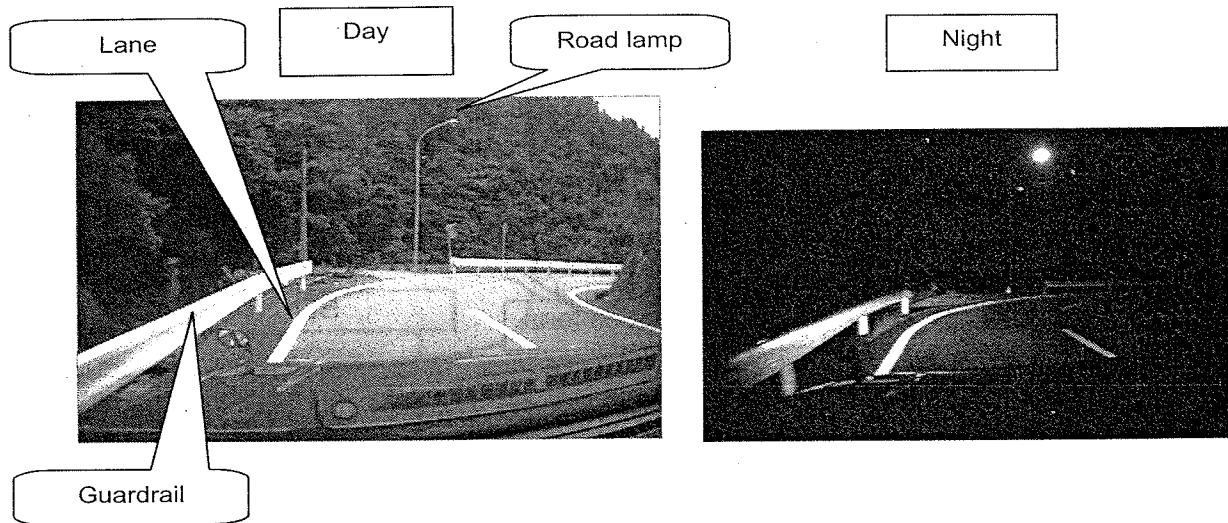


*Fig.4 Approach to R16 right corner on test course*

## 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.

| 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*

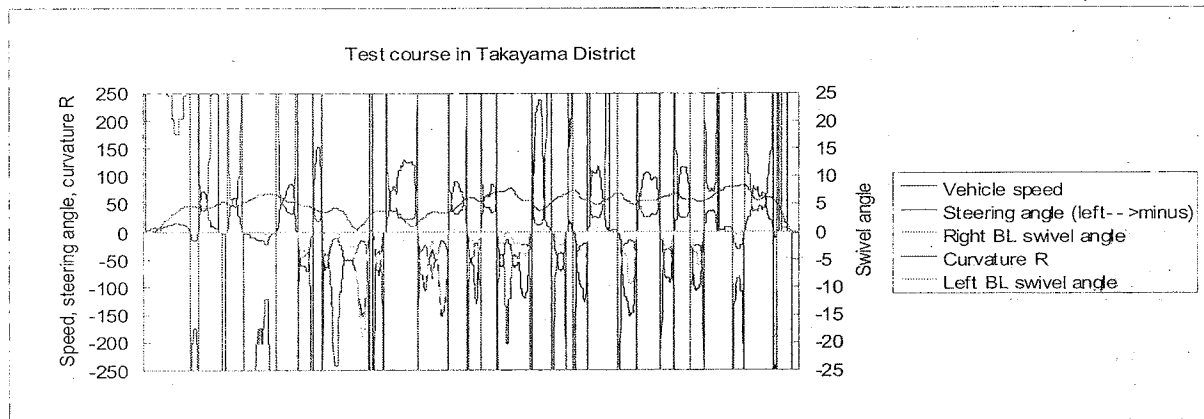


*Fig.5 Measurements of curvature R, driving speed, swivel*

#### 4.2.2. Quantitative evaluation of eye focus area visibility

##### (1) Investigation of eye focus position

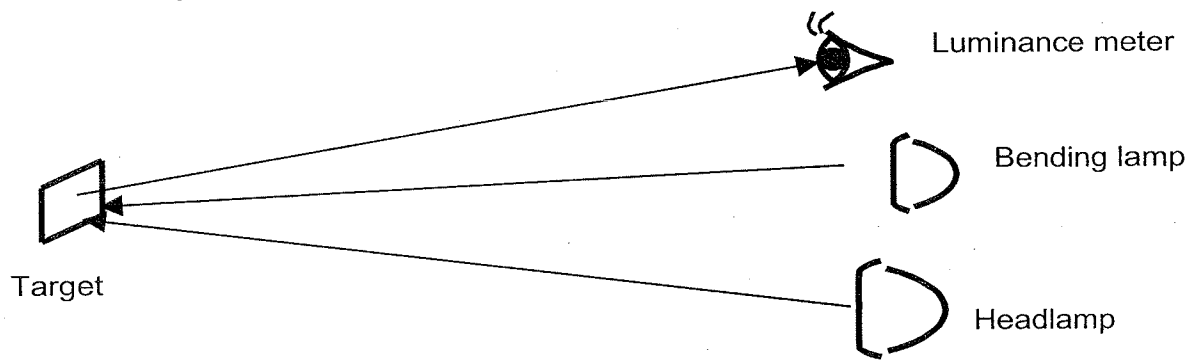
It was assumed that, during driving, drivers fixate their eyes at a point where the vehicle will arrive in 1.5 seconds later and which varies slightly according to corner curvature and driving speed.

- 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%.

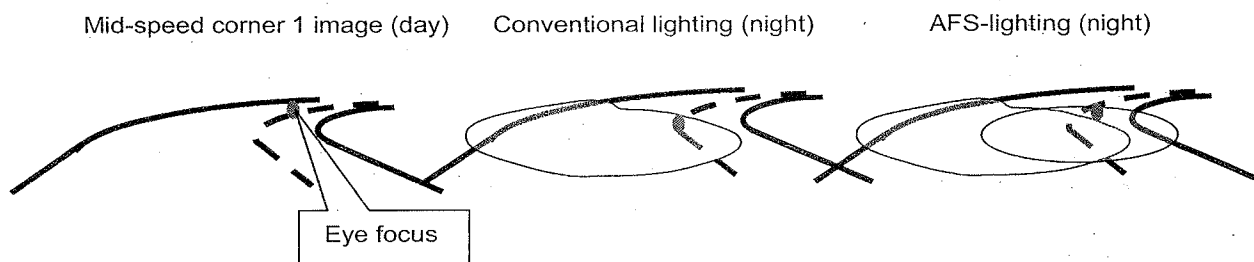
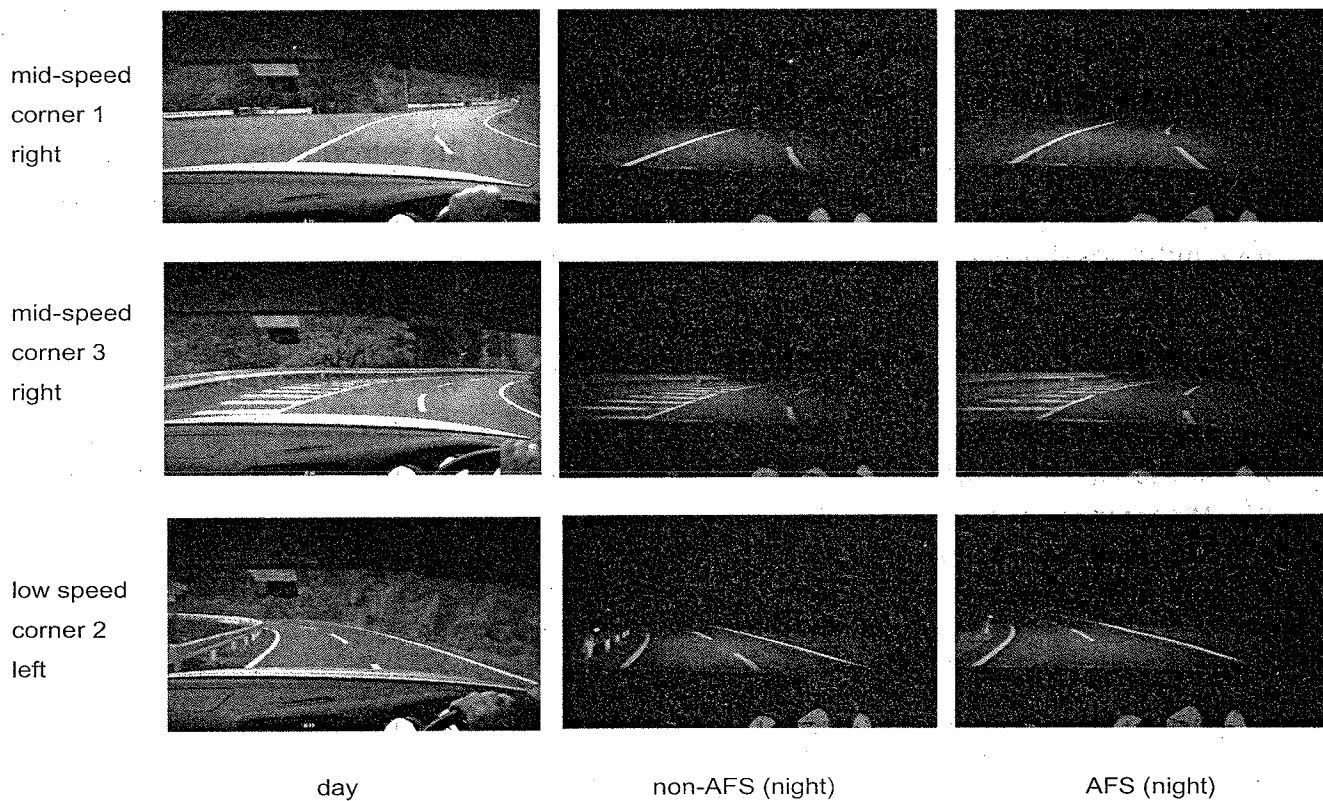
#### 4.3. Evaluation Results

##### 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.

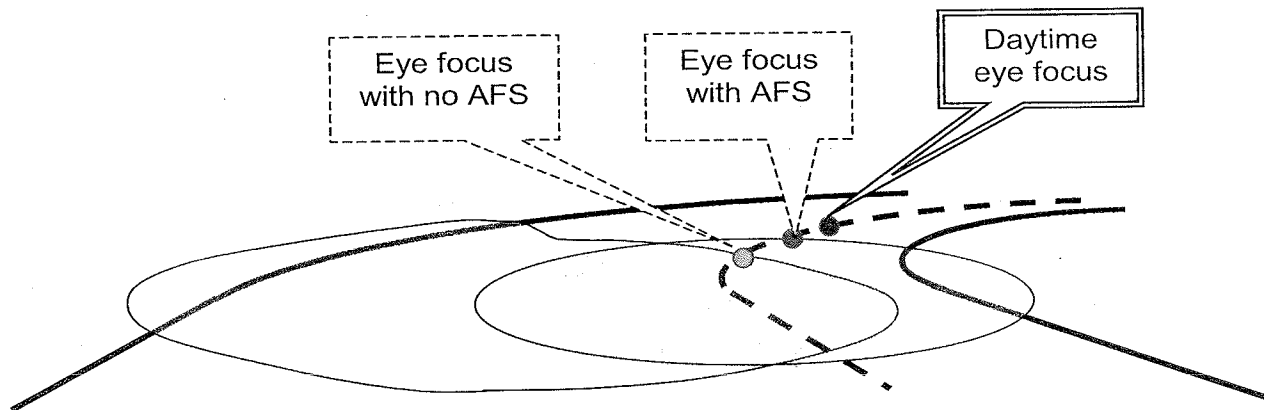
## Results of Perceptual Rating

| Rating target                | Curvature R (m) | Sppeed (km/h) | Rating point<br>Conventional<br>car | AFS-equipped<br>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                   |



#### 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) | Speed (km/h) | Contrast    |         | (B)<br>(A) |
|---------------|----------------------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|---------|------------|
|               |                            |                 |              | Non AFS (A) | AFS (B) |            |
| 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       |

## **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