CLAIMS

[Claim 1]

An operation device comprising at least:

a layer having a plurality of marked portions ~~on which~~ having at least any of an icon, text and a marking ~~information used for operation is written in accordance with a shape of at least one of a transmitting portion and a non-transmitting portion~~,

a light emitting member provided on a rear side of the layer and having a surface opposed to the marked portions, the light emitting member emitting incident light from the surface; and

a plurality of light sources at least one of which is provided for each of the marked portions to cause the light to enter the light emitting member, the light sources being disposed such that optical axes thereof are substantially parallel to the layer,

wherein at least some of the plurality of marked portions form at least three blocks,

wherein the three blocks are arranged in a line,

wherein the three blocks are formed such that, when a figure including the three blocks and having a minimum total peripheral length is drawn, a width dimension of the figure in a direction perpendicular to a line direction of the line is smaller than a width dimension in a direction parallel to the line direction of the line, and

wherein the light source provided in correspondence with at least one of the marked portions that forms the center block of the three blocks is disposed such that an optical axis thereof is substantially perpendicular to the line direction of the line.

[Claim 2]

The operation device of claim 1, wherein the light source provided in correspondence with at least one of the marked portions that forms the block on an outer side of the center block of the three blocks is disposed such that an optical axis thereof is substantially parallel to the line direction of the line and such that the light enters the light emitting member from a side close to the center block.

[Claim 3]

An operation device comprising at least:

a layer having a plurality of marked portions ~~on which~~ having at least any of an icon, text and a marking ~~information used for operation is written in accordance with a shape of at least one of a transmitting portion and a non-transmitting portion~~,

a light emitting member provided on a rear side of the layer and having a surface opposed to the marked portions, the light emitting member emitting incident light from the surface; and

a plurality of light sources at least one of which is provided for each of the marked portions to cause the light to enter the light emitting member, the light sources being disposed such that optical axes thereof are substantially parallel to the layer,

wherein at least some of the plurality of marked portions form at least three blocks,

wherein the three blocks are arranged in a line,

wherein the three blocks are formed such that, when a figure including the three blocks and having a minimum total peripheral length is drawn, a width dimension of the figure in a direction perpendicular to a line direction of the line is smaller than a width dimension in a direction parallel to the line direction of the line, and

wherein the light source provided in correspondence with at least one of the marked portions that forms the block located on an outer side of the center block of the three blocks is disposed such that an optical axis thereof is substantially parallel to the line direction of the line and such that the light enters the light emitting member from a side close to the center block.

[Claim 4]

The operation device of any one of claims 1 to 3, wherein the marked portion that forms the center block includes at least the marked portion having information explaining a function.

[Claim 5]

The operation device of claim 4,

wherein the marked portion that forms one of the blocks located on outer sides of the center block includes at least the marked portion having information used to select the function, and

wherein the marked portion that forms the other of the blocks located on the outer sides of the center block includes at least the marked portion having information used to set the function.

[Claim 6]

The operation device of any one of claims 1 to 5, wherein the three blocks are arranged in series.

[Claim 7]

The operation device of any one of claims 1 to 6,

wherein the layer is provided on a transmissive member,

wherein the light emitting member is a light guide plate, and

wherein the light guide plate is combined with a rear side of the transmissive member.

[Claim 8]

The operation device of any one of claims 1 to 6,

wherein the layer is provided on a transmissive member,

wherein the transmissive member has a light scattering pattern, and

wherein the light emitting member is the transmissive member.

[Claim 9]

The operation device of claim 8, wherein the light scattering pattern is formed such that a pattern density increases with increasing distance from the light source.

[Claim 10]

The operation device of any one of claims 1 to 9,

wherein input means is provided on a rear side of the light emitting member, and

wherein the input means is an electrode of a capacitive touch sensor.

[Claim 11]

A refrigerator-freezer comprising at least the operation device of any one of claims 1 to 10.

[Claim 12]

The refrigerator-freezer of claim 11, wherein the three blocks are arranged in a vertical line.

[Claim 13]

The refrigerator-freezer of claim 11 or 12, wherein the center block is provided at a height substantially equal to a height of a gaze of a user of standard height when the user views from a front side while standing upright.