

sandwiched between the symbol placement face and the symbol transmission face on a face on the side of the reels **3** for assisting image display of the liquid crystal **504** (image display means). Thus, in the area formed as the reel **3** is circular in cross section, namely, the image display assistance area sandwiched between the symbol placement face and the symbol transmission face on the vertical face on the side of the reel **3**, image display is assisted with the reel side reflector **320** as the background, so that the player perceives color development in the area on the liquid crystal **504** with the reel side reflector **320** as the background, the color development effect of the effect image can be enhanced with good energy efficiency, and the player can clearly recognize the effect image and enjoy playing a game.

[0106] The gaming machine of the first embodiment of the invention includes the reels **3** (contained in variable display means) for variably displaying of a plurality of symbol rows each made up of a plurality of symbols, the liquid crystal **504** (contained in image display means) being provided in front of the reels **3** for displaying an image concerning game play, the reel backlights **513** (contained in symbol illumination means) for illuminating the symbols, and the reel side reflectors **320** (contained in image display assistance means) being provided on sides of the reels **3** for reflecting light emitted from the reel backlights **513**. Thus, the light from the illumination light provided for illuminating the symbols is reflected on the sides of the symbol rows and arrives directly or indirectly at the areas in front of the reels **3**, so that the image in front of the variable display means is illuminated for improving color development of the image within the frame of the display window, the illumination effect of the effect image can be enhanced with good energy efficiency, and the player can clearly recognize the effect image and enjoy playing a game.

[0107] The fluorescent lamps **510** (contained in symbol illumination means) for illuminating the symbols from the slanting direction of the front of the symbols are provided and the reel side reflectors **320** reflect light emitted from the fluorescent lamps **510**, so that the illumination effect of the effect image can be furthermore enhanced with good energy efficiency.

[0108] The reel side reflectors **320** are attached to the reel case **310** (contained in housing) for housing the reels **3**, so that when the door is opened or closed, the image display assistance means does not become a hindrance and the door can be opened or closed without a hitch as compared with the case where the image display assistance means corresponding to the reel side reflector **320** is attached to the door of the machine.

[0109] In the description of the embodiment, the white plate that can be molded, can enhance the illumination effect at a low cost, and produces the image perception effect is used as the reel side reflector **320**. In the invention, however, a mirror plate or any other reflection member having a good reflection efficiency may be used as the reel side reflector **320**.

[0110] Second Embodiment

[0111] FIG. 12 shows a reel means **1300** in a gaming machine of a second embodiment of the invention. Components identical with those of reel means **300** previously described with reference to FIG. 3 are denoted by the same

reference numerals in FIG. 12. Side illumination lights **1325** each implemented, for example, as a white light emitting diode are provided on the sides in front of reels **3L**, **3C**, and **3R** for illuminating symbols on the front of the reels **3L**, **3C**, and **3R** from the sides and also illuminating liquid crystal **504** from the rear sides. Side plates **1320L** and **1320R** are attached to the sides of a reel case **310** for holding the side illumination lights **1325**.

[0112] As the side plate **1320L**, **1320R**, a member for reflecting light may be used like the reel side reflector **320** in FIG. 3. It is advisable to use a white member for causing the player to perceive color development of an image.

[0113] As described above, the gaming machine of the second embodiment of the invention includes the reels **3** (contained in variable display means) for variably displaying of a plurality of symbol rows each made up of a plurality of symbols, the liquid crystal **504** (contained in image display means) being provided in front of the reels **3** for displaying an image concerning game play, and the side illumination lights **1325** (contained in side illumination means) being provided on the sides of the reels **3** for illuminating the symbols on the reels **3** from the sides. Thus, the light emitted from the side of the symbol row arrives directly or indirectly at the display area of the liquid crystal **504** in front of the reels **3**, color development in the display area in front of the reels **3** is improved, the illumination effect of the effect image can be enhanced, and the player can clearly recognize the effect image and enjoy playing a game.

[0114] In the description of the embodiment, the side plates **1320L** and **1320R** are attached to the sides of the reel case **310**, and the side illumination lights **1325** are attached to the side plates **1320L** and **1320R**. In the invention, however, they are attached in a different manner if the side illumination lights **1325** are disposed on the sides in front of the reels **3L**, **3C**, and **3R**. For example, a plate may be attached to a position on the door and on a side in front of the reels **3L**, **3C**, and **3R** and the plate on the door may hold white light emitting diodes.

[0115] Each side illumination light **1325** may be not only a white light emitting diode, but also any other illumination light such as a fluorescent lamp.

[0116] As described above, according to the invention, the gaming machine for making it possible to sharply display an image even in an area for displaying symbols on reels through the area and enabling the player to clearly recognize the image and enjoy playing a game can be provided.

[0117] Although only some exemplary embodiments of the invention have been described in detail above, those skilled in the art will readily appreciate that many modifications are possible in the exemplary embodiments without materially departing from the novel teachings and advantages of the invention. Accordingly, all such modifications are intended to be included within the scope of the invention.

[0118] This application is related to co-pending U.S. patent applications entitled "GAMING MACHINE" referred to as Attorney Docket No. SHO-0019, "GAMING MACHINE" referred to as Attorney Docket No. SHO-0020, "GAMING MACHINE" referred to as Attorney Docket No. SHO-0021, "GAMING MACHINE" referred to as Attorney Docket No. SHO-0022, "GAMING MACHINE" referred to as Attorney Docket No. SHO-0023, "GAMING