another after termination of the conversation, the unit position detector detects this position change, and the call arrival and termination controller automatically sets the operation state to the on-hook state (communication termination processing). Of course, the same communication termination can be made by the user operating a predetermined termination key for off-hook in the normal communication position.

[0135] 1.8) Transmission and Reception Operation

[0136] Next, the operation of transmitting and receiving character data or graphics data in this portable telephone will be described. The portable telephone monitors whether the selected signal includes a signal indicating transmission of character data to its own terminal (standby reception). When character data or graphics data has been received, the control unit **109** automatically receives the transmitted character data without waiting for the off-hook operation, and displays information in the display unit **202** based on the received data. At the same time, the alert controller **116** drives the alert means **110** such as a beeper or a vibrator in a predetermined fashion different from that at the occurrence of an incoming call to notify the user that character data or graphics data has been received.

[0137] In other words, a signal carrying character data received from the call originating terminal is output to the modem **106** via the RF circuit **105**, and is demodulated by the modem **106**. The demodulated signal enters the baseband processing circuit **107**, which extracts character data from the demodulated signal, to output it to the control unit **109**.

[0138] The control unit **109** includes the a CPU, a ROM storing programs, data necessary to process various kinds of processing, and character font data, a RAM used as a work area, a Video RAM to display information on the display unit **202**, and the display controller **114** that controls the display unit **202** and/or the secondary display **206**.

[0139] The display controller **114** forms character information or graphic information to be displayed on the display unit **202** (or the secondary display unit **206** if necessary) based on data received from the baseband processing circuit **107**.

[0140] Further, the portable telephone can create message data and transmit it to a destination. In other words, alphabet letters and Katakana characters are allocated to dial operation keys such as 0 to 9, *, and # that are provided on the operation section **102**, and these keys include a conversion key for alphabet/Kana/Kanji/numeral conversion. It is possible to input message data and transmit it to a destination designated by the user operating these dial operation keys and the conversion key.

[0141] Particularly, in this portable telephone, when character data or graphics data is transmitted or received, the display unit **202** can be rotated to set the display to be horizontally long or horizontally oriented, making it easy to read displayed information, compared with the case of a vertically oriented screen. When character data or graphics data has been received, it is possible to use the display unit **202** as a horizontally oriented display unit as shown in **FIG. 9C** if the user wishes. At this time, as described before, the display controller **114** displays the display contents on the display unit **202** by converting the contents so as to match the direction of the horizontally oriented screen. The upper unit **202** may be fixed to be reversed left to right, which is opposite to that in **FIG. 9C**. At this time, the display controller **114** also displays the contents on the display unit **202** by converting the contents to match the direction of the horizontally oriented screen. Further, the processing instructed by a predetermined operation key is appropriately changed as described before.

[0142] Further, in this portable telephone, it is possible to transmit and receive character data or graphics data in the state that the upper unit and the lower unit are folded with the display unit **202** facing out. In other words, in the folded state with the display unit **202** facing out, the user can see the display unit **202** as it is. As the secondary operation keys **207** are also exposed to the external surface, when character data or graphics data has been received, it is possible to confirm the display instantly, and it is also possible to carry out a simple response operation in a state that the portable telephone is closed. At this time, when the display controller **114** displays the display contents on the display unit **202** by converting the contents to match the direction of the display screen that is reversed, the user can look at the display and carry out a response operation in the manner that the user is used to holding the terminal in the hand.

[0143] At the time of receiving desired image data, it is possible to make a request for the desired image data by setting the upper unit as shown in **FIG. 9C**. At the time of transmitting character data such as a message, it is possible to input characters in a position as shown in **FIG. 9**C, allowing easy input of characters in an easy-to-read display.

[0144] As described above, the portable telephone according to the present embodiment can provide the following advantages.

[0145] First, a conventional foldable portable telephone that is commercially available cannot see the main display without opening it. However, according to the present embodiment, the portable telephone can be folded with the display section facing out. Therefore, without opening the portable telephone, the user can read a mail, look at a map or other image, or confirm a calling party on the display. Consequently, the user can immediately carry out the operation of receiving a telephone call after judging the display contents in the closed state. When the portable telephone is folded with the display section facing out, it is possible to carry it in compact while looking at a map or the like on the screen. When the portable telephone is folded with the display section facing in as in the conventional case, it is possible to carry the portable telephone with protecting the display section. Further, by rotating the display unit to vertical orientation, it is possible to display the contents in a desired one of vertically oriented and horizontally oriented states with one portable telephone having the same size as the conventional one.

[0146] Second Embodiment

[0147] FIGS. **12A-12D** show different positions of of a portable information terminal according to the second embodiment of the present invention. The portable telephone **500A** according to the present embodiment is also composed mainly of three portions including a lower unit **100** that has an operation section, an upper unit **200** that has a display section, and a biaxial hinge **300'** as a movable connecting member that connects the lower unit **100** and the