Viewing Characteristics of Super-High-Definition Digital Materials
“RAKUCHU-RAKUGAI-ZU Folding Screens”: Analysis from Viewing Behavior of Visitor to a Museum

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Larger historical paintings and drawings with small characters and pictures on them, such as folding screens, picture scrolls, and ancient maps, are digitized in extremely high definition so that they can be displayed by the historical material viewing system that is developed to display explanations about certain parts of the materials on the screen and zoom in and out wherever the users want to look. These super-high-definition digital materials have been used for exhibition and research. Among them, the super-high-definition digital images of the Folding Screens of Scenes In and Around Kyoto (Rakuchu-Rakugai-Zu) were installed at several special exhibitions and a general exhibition in autumn, when the actual Folding Screens of Rekihaku A Version were put on display. Since April 2010, these digital images have been open to the public as a permanent exhibition.

The present article is aimed at clarifying museum visitors’ behavior patterns to consult the super-high-definition digital materials and thus making suggestions for future exhibition planning. To this end, the article makes the following matters clear by analyzing the museum visitors’ log recorded during the above-mentioned exhibitions.

At the permanent exhibition, there were many visitors who did not make full use of the viewing system due to their unfamiliarity with its operation. At the special exhibitions and autumn exhibition, there were many visitors who knew well how to use the viewing system and carefully looked at the digital images.

The amount of use of the viewing system varied depending on where in the exhibition hall it was installed. The more at the front, the more it was used; the more at the rear, the less it was used. In the former case, some people left after using it for a little while. In the latter case, people tended to look around at different parts of the images more carefully.

Some users magnified the image of Rekihaku A Version, which had been digitized in the highest definition, larger than the original picture. The super-high-definition digitalization can be judged to be useful.

Usually, except for at the permanent exhibition, people looked at not only the central part but also the whole part of images. Many people consulted the explanation on the display, if any, to choose where to look. Therefore, it can be confirmed that the explanation display plays a kind of role as a navigation aid.

Moreover, people had no difficulties in using functions that appear to be hard to operate, such as a comparison display to show related objects together. Visitors also used both manual mode and scenario
mode on a fifty-fifty basis, and some of them switched from scenario to manual mode. Therefore, it can be confirmed that the initial purposes of the system installation have been achieved.

Keywords: Image viewing, Viewer, Exhibition system, Historical materials, Museum materials