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(54) **REFRIGERATOR WITH WATER PURIFYING MEANS**

Publication Classification

(76) Inventor: **Seongtaik KIM**, Changwon-Si (KR)

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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Feb. 22, 2011 (KR) 10-2011-0015697

A refrigerator with a water purifying arrangement includes a refrigerator door having a water supply passage along which water is supplied to the outside of the refrigerator; a case detachably mounted to the refrigerator door such that at least part of the case is exposed at the outside of the refrigerator door; and a water filter mounted to the case, and disposed at the refrigerator door such that water supplied along the water supply passage passes through the water filter.

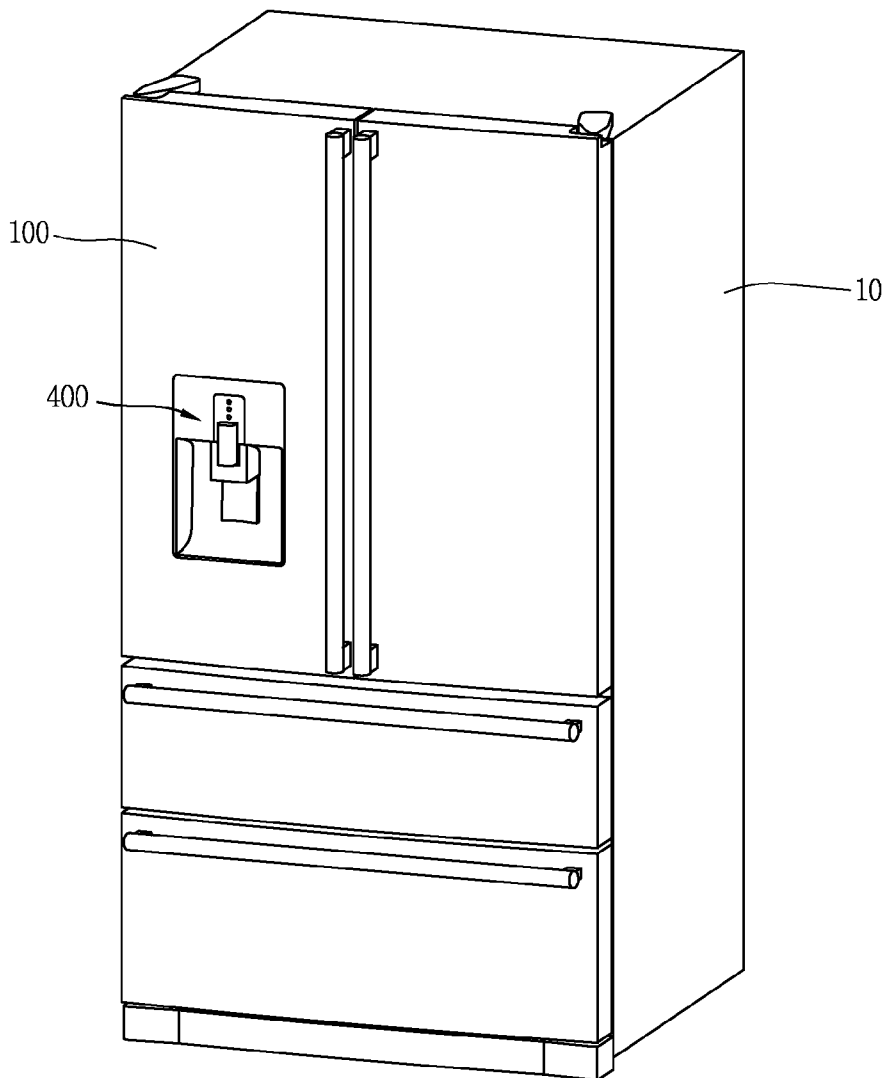


FIG. 1

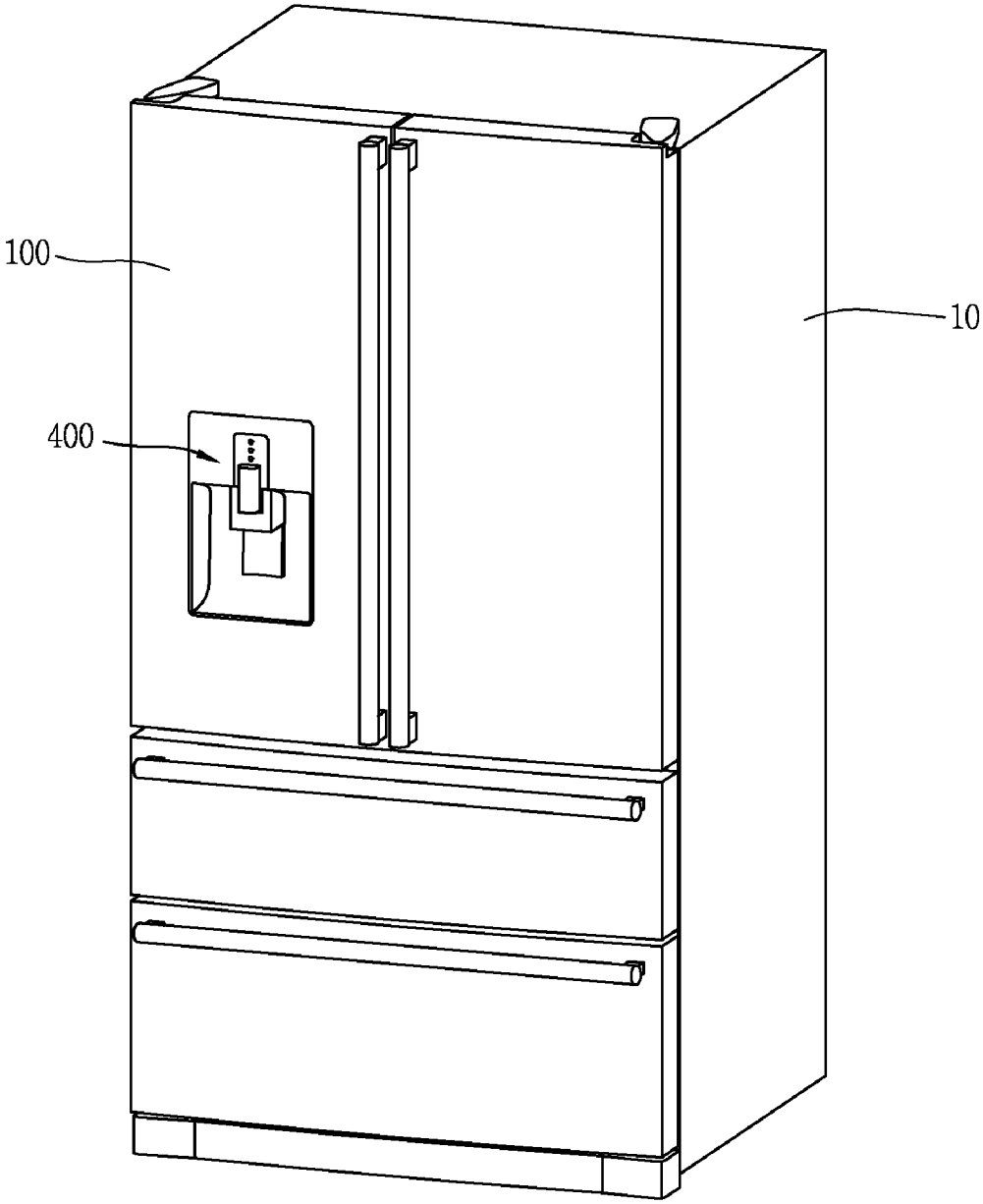


FIG. 2A

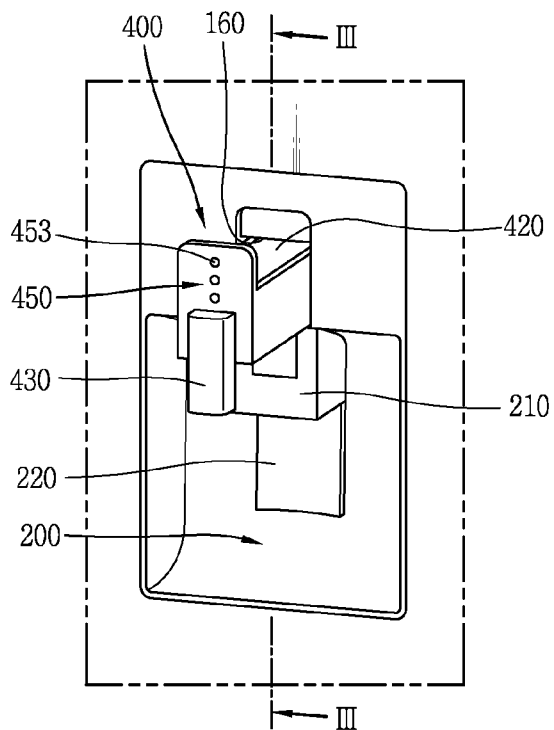


FIG. 2B

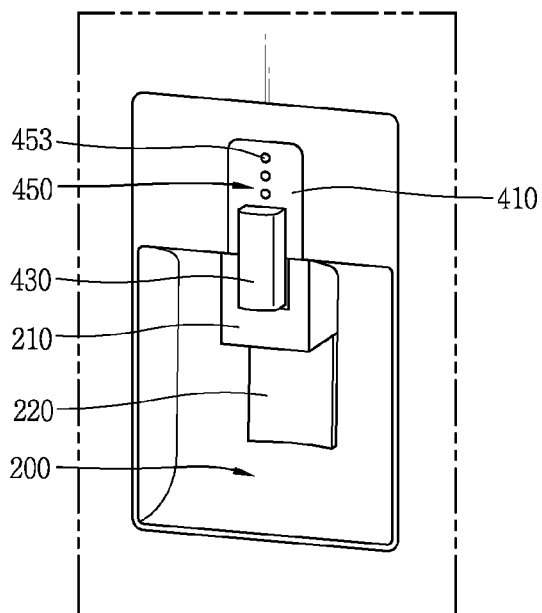


FIG. 3

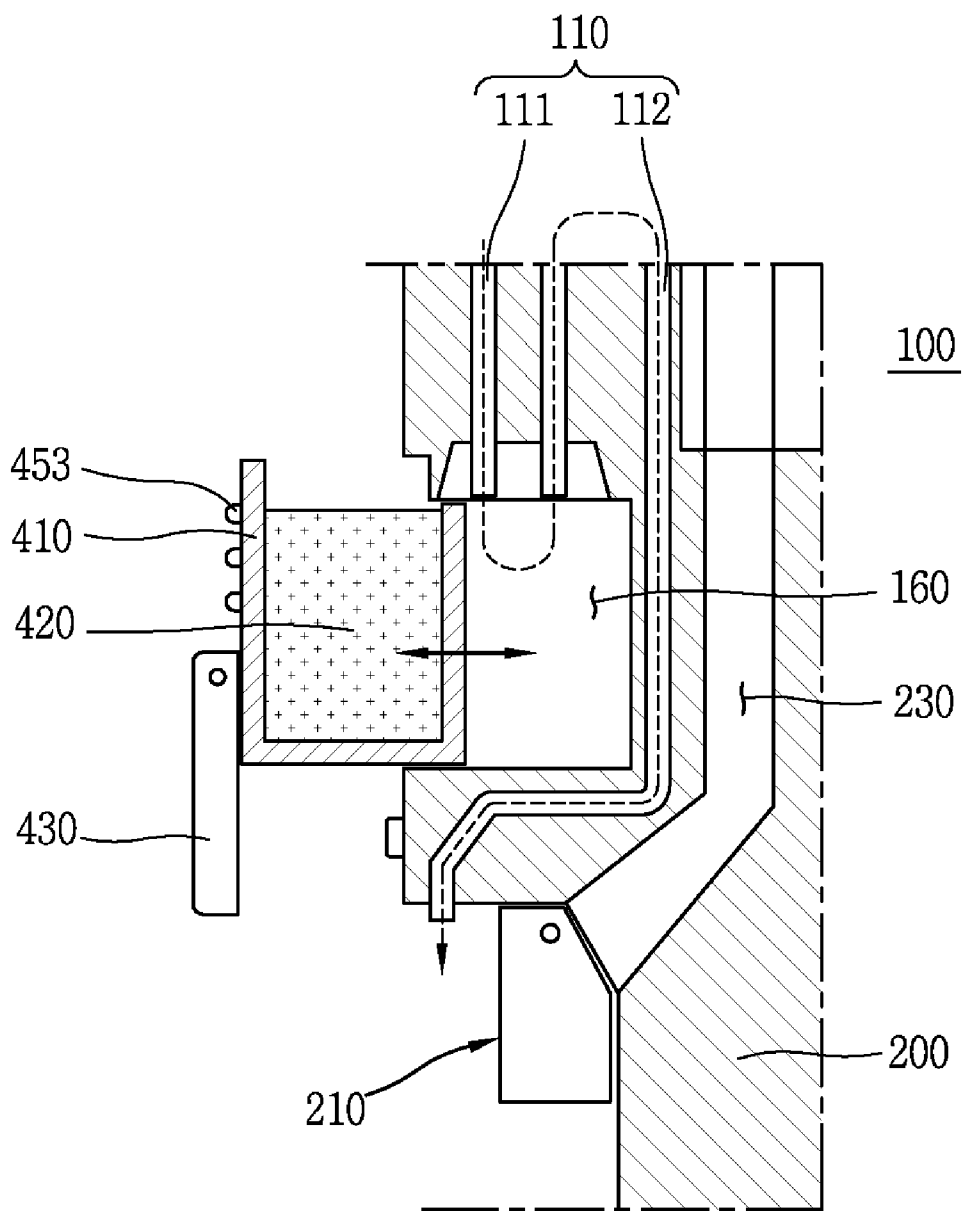


FIG. 4

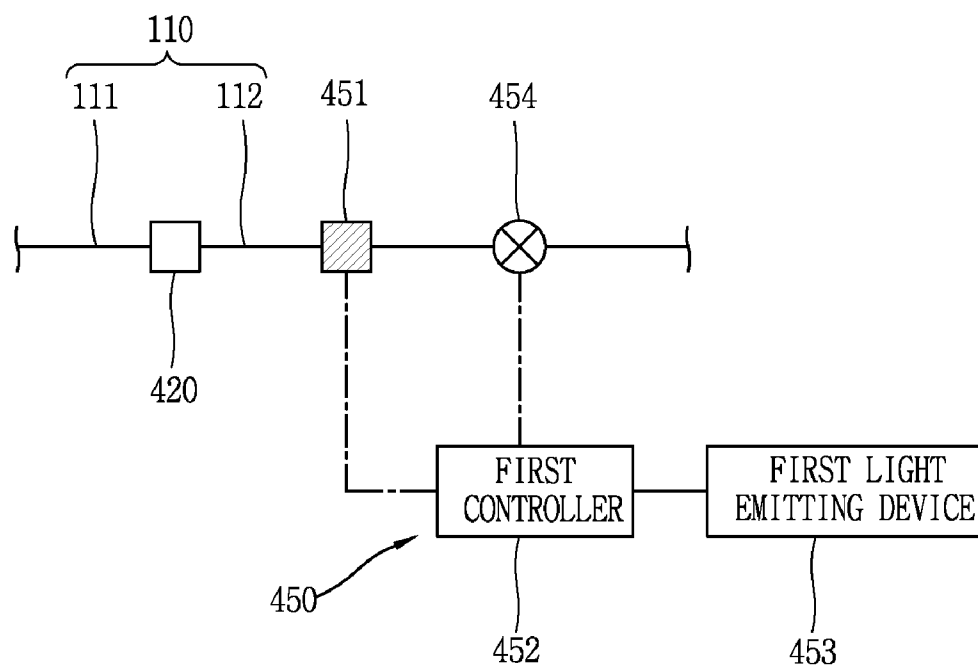


FIG. 5

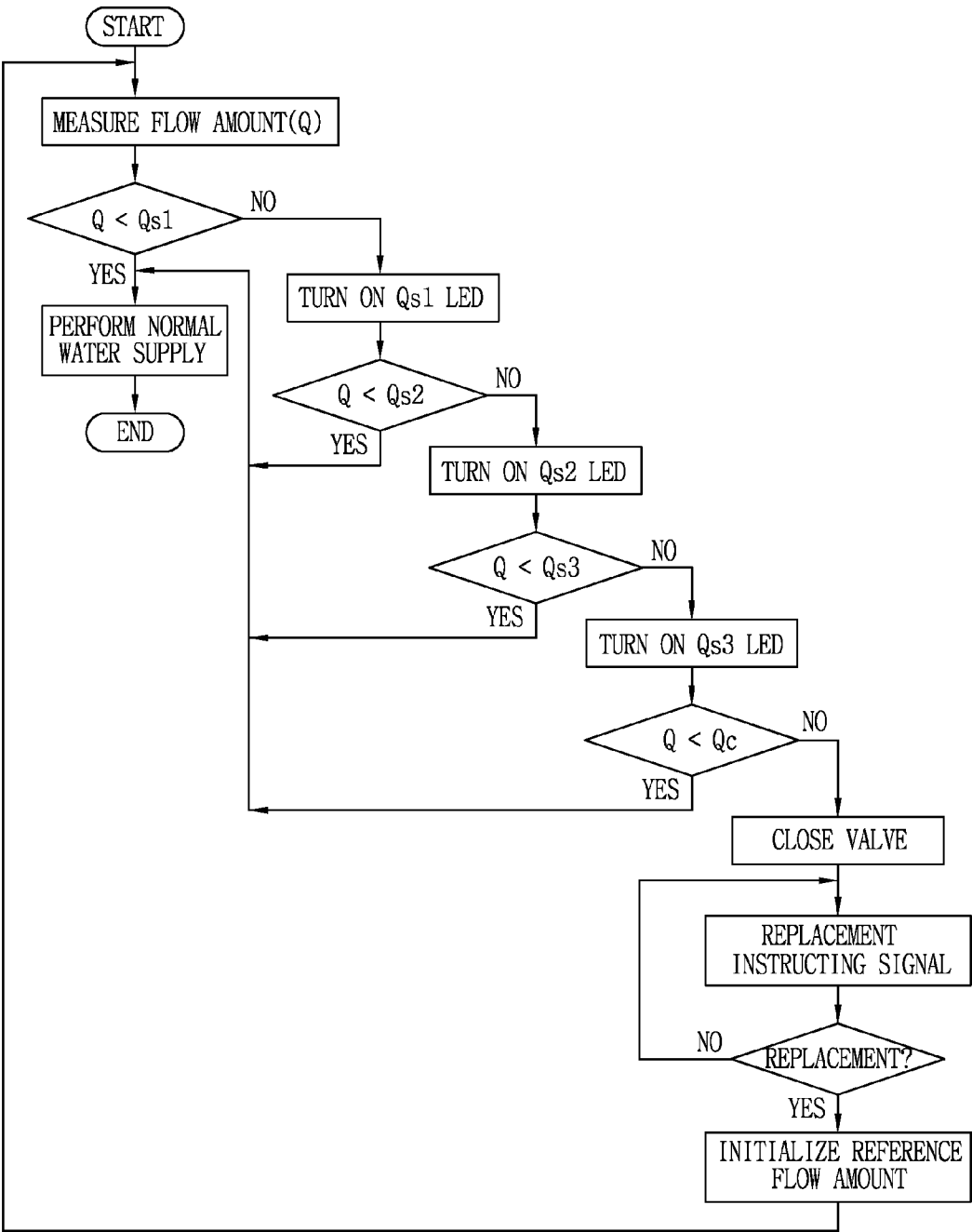


FIG. 6

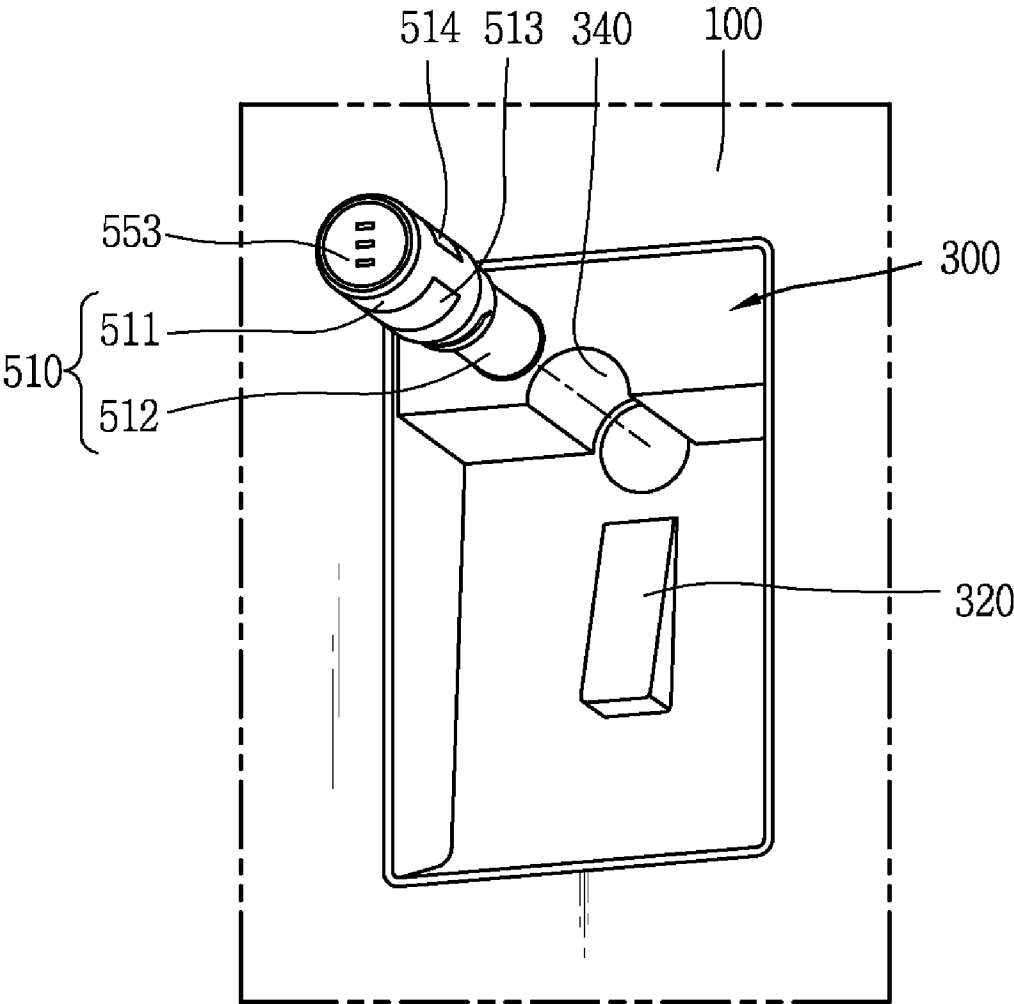


FIG. 7

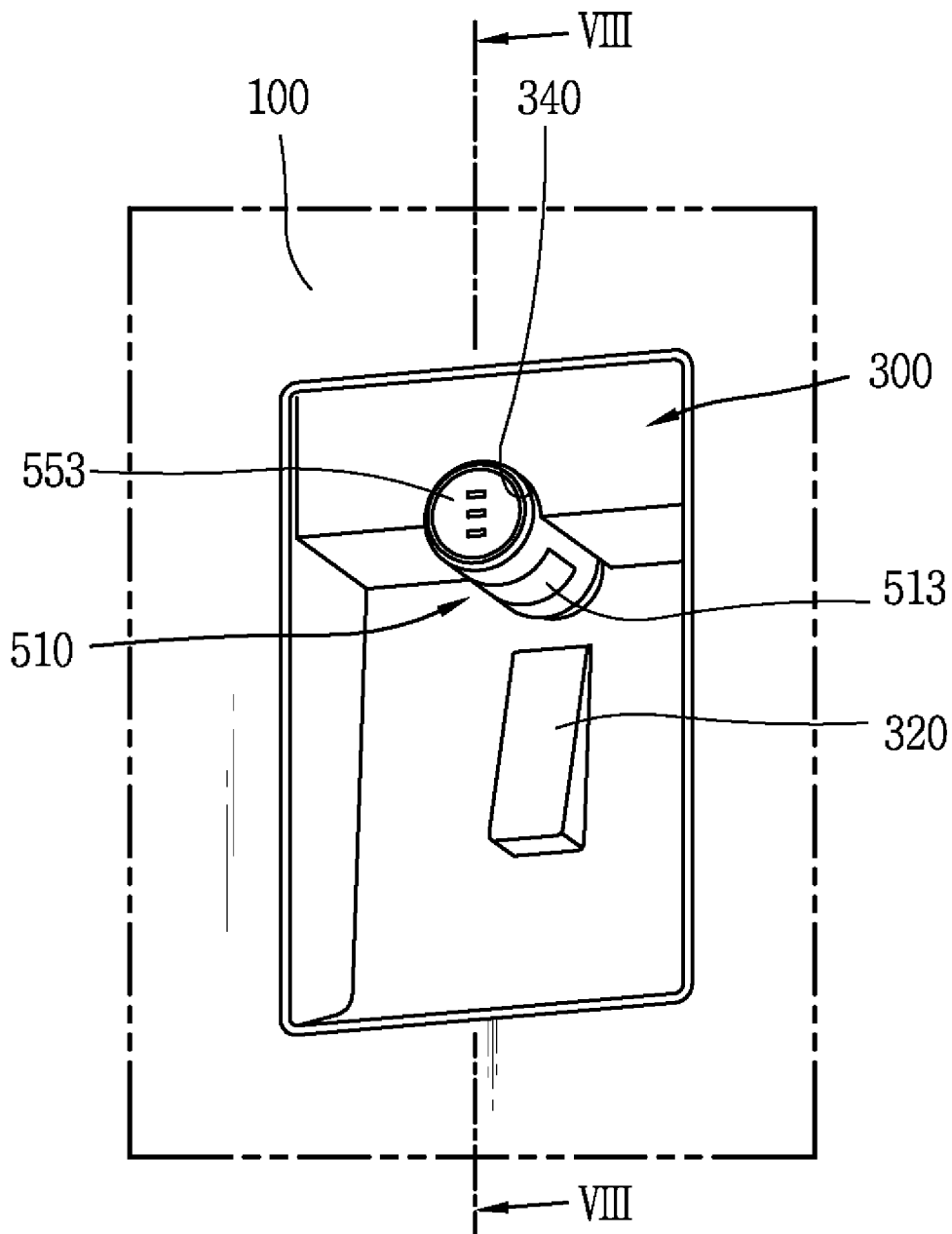


FIG. 8

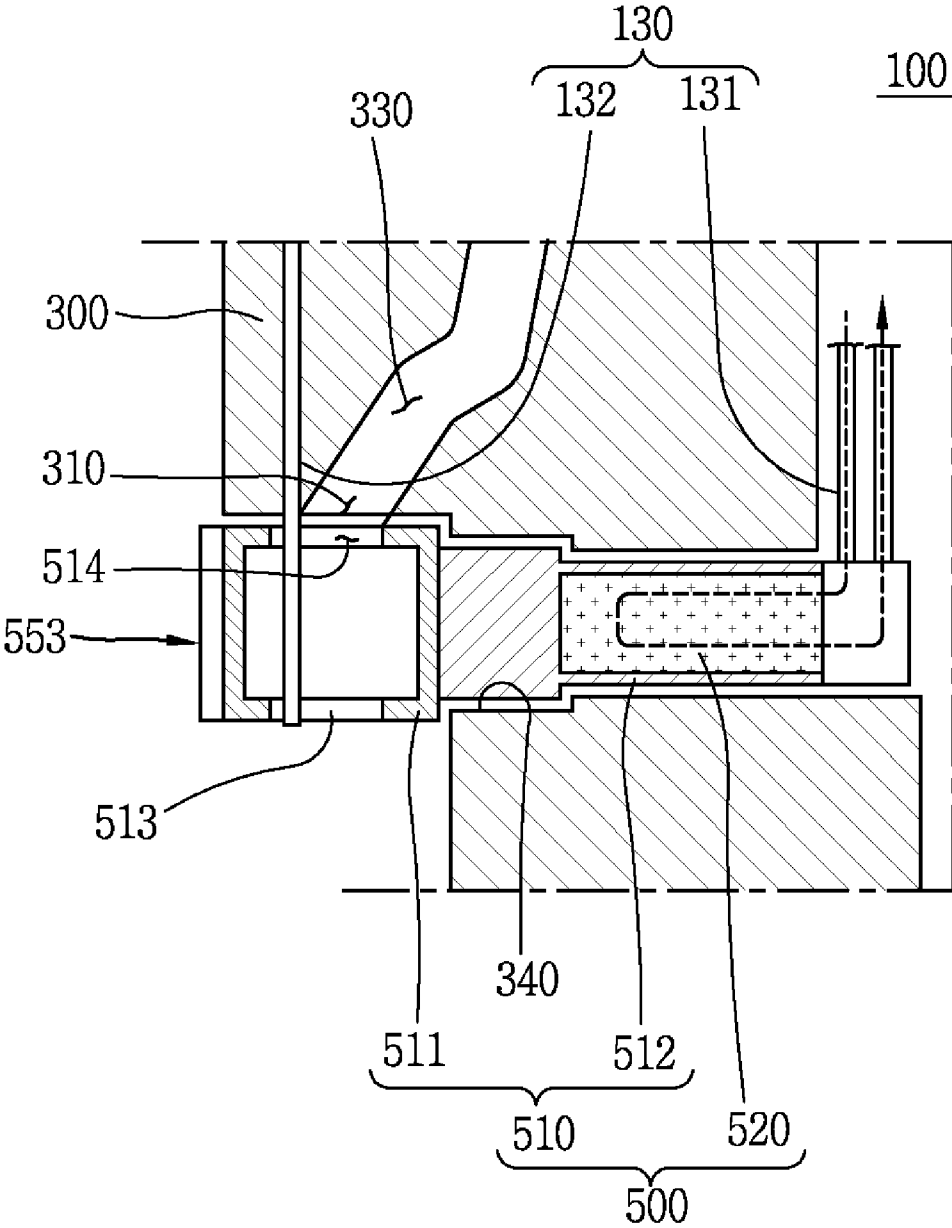


FIG. 9

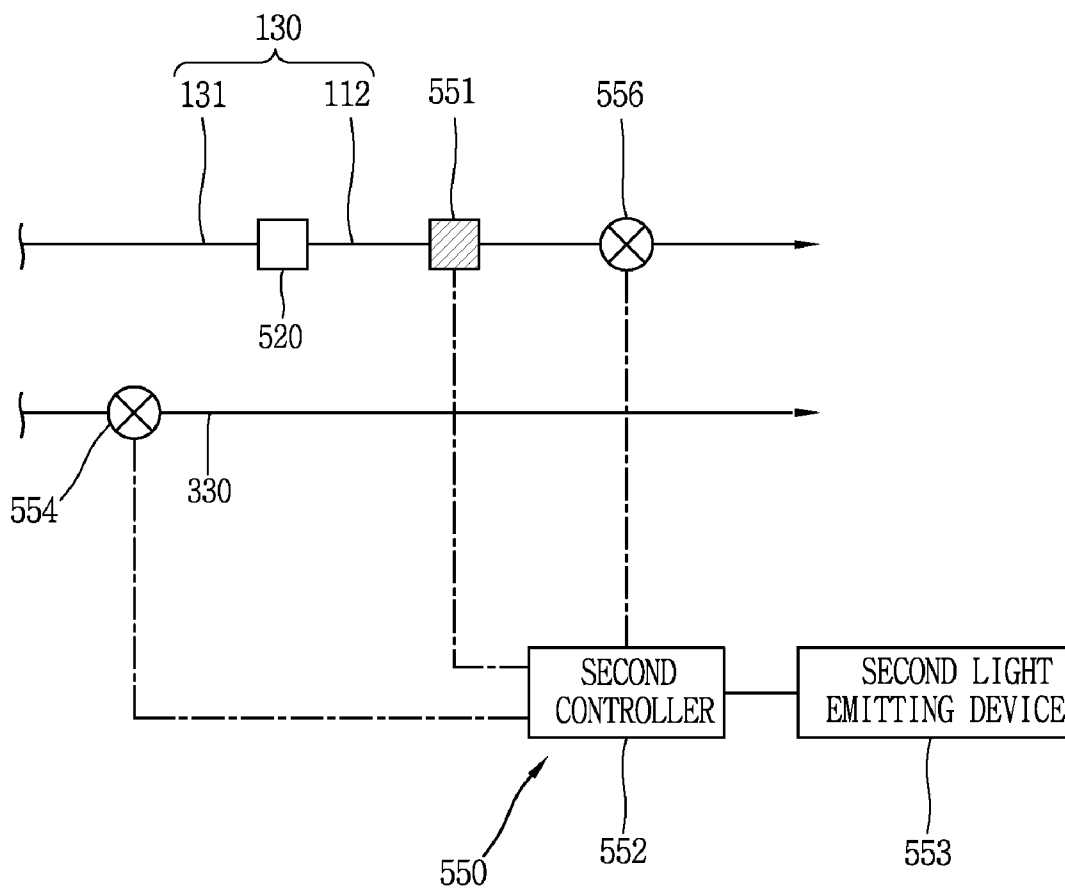


FIG. 10

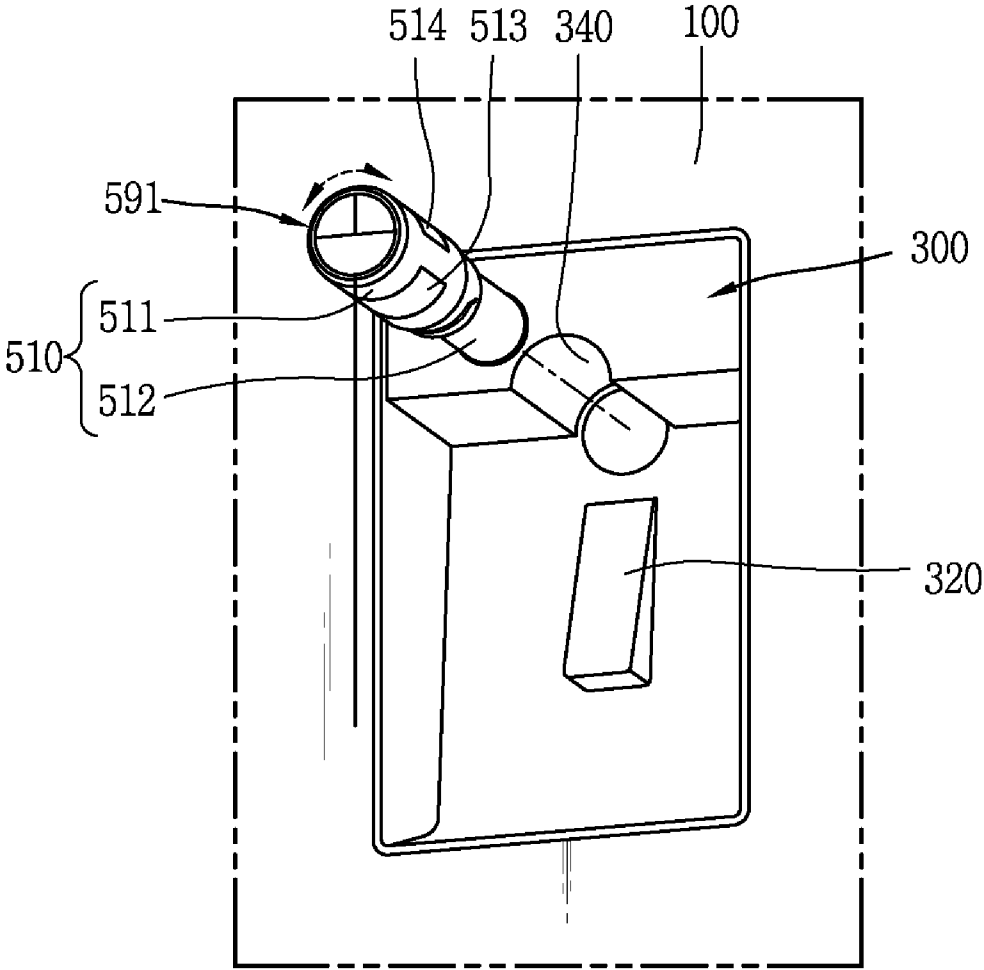


FIG. 11

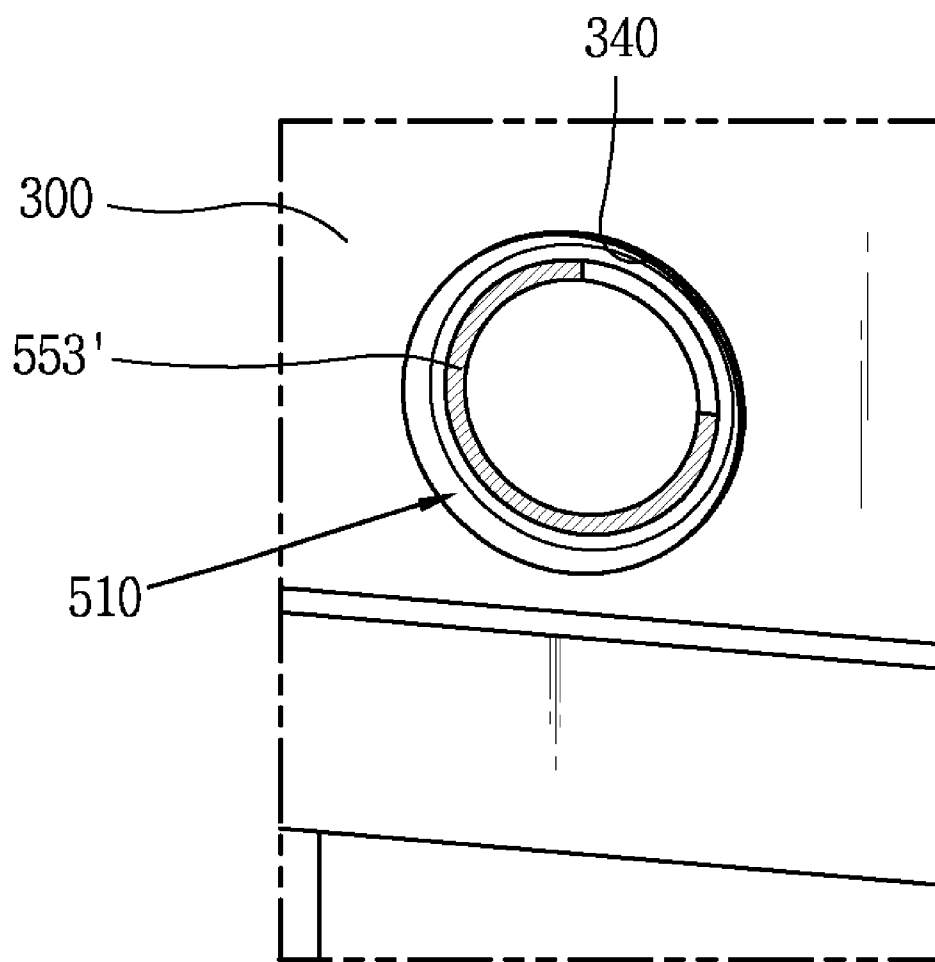


FIG. 12

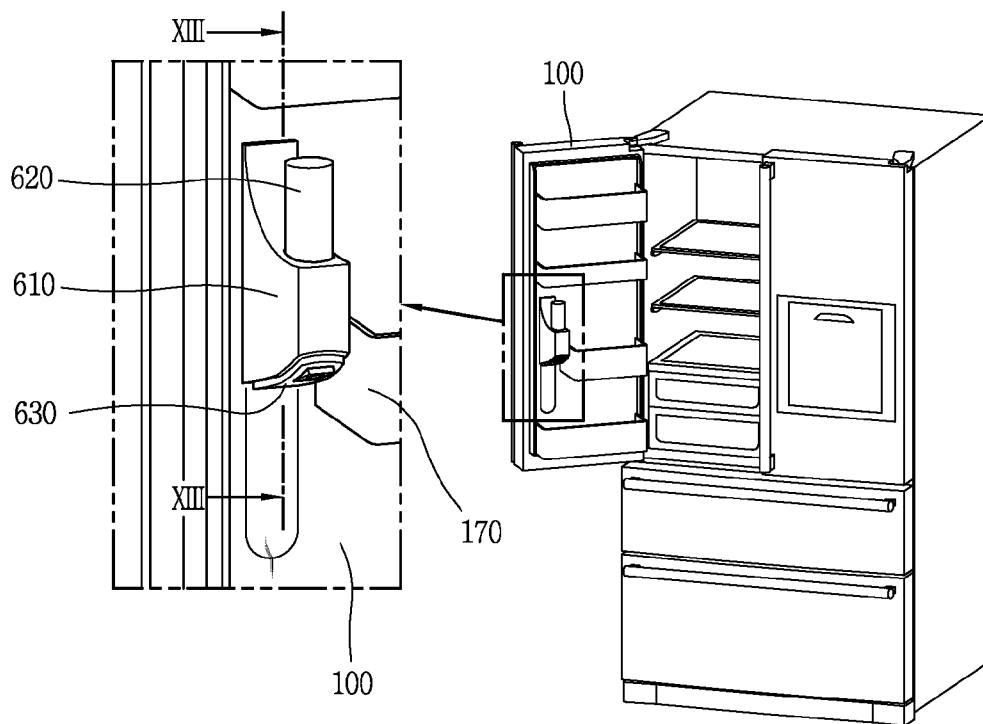


FIG. 13

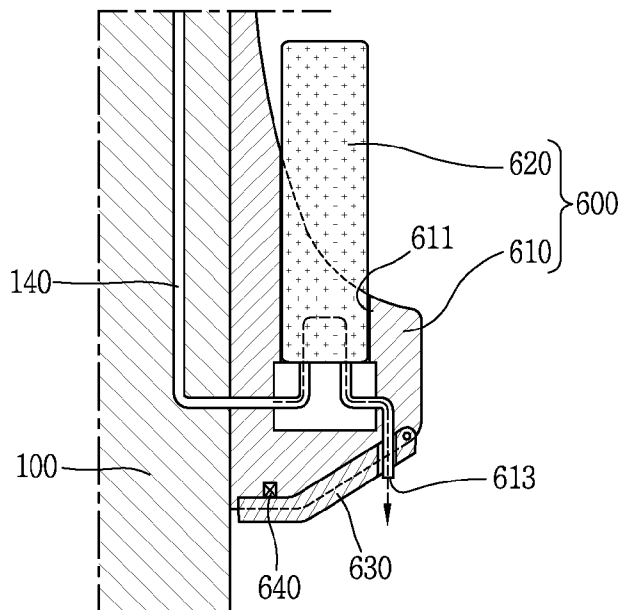
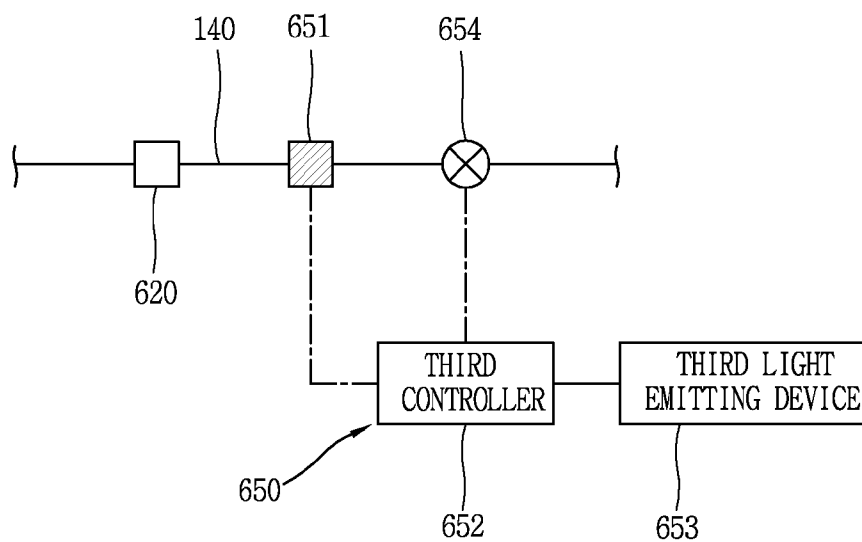


FIG. 14



REFRIGERATOR WITH WATER PURIFYING MEANS

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

[0001] This application claims the benefit of Korean Patent Application No. 10-2011-0015697, filed on Feb. 22, 2011, which is hereby incorporated by reference for all purposes as if fully set forth herein.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] 1. Field of the Invention

[0003] The present disclosure relates to a refrigerator having a water purifying means, and more particularly, to a refrigerator having a water filter for purifying supplied water.

[0004] 2. Background of the Invention

[0005] Generally, a refrigerator for storing food items at a preset temperature is provided with a freezing chamber and a refrigerating chamber. The freezing chamber and the refrigerating chamber maintain preset temperatures by a cooling device provided in the refrigerator.

[0006] A dispenser for allowing a user to take out ice or water disposed in the refrigerator without opening a refrigerator door may be provided at the refrigerator door. The dispenser may minimize the discharge of cool air to the outside, and may enhance a user's convenience.

[0007] The refrigerator may be also provided with a water filter for filtering water supplied through the dispenser. Since the water filter is installed in the refrigerator, it is sometimes difficult to replace the water filter with a new one, and it is difficult to check whether the water filter is no longer of any use.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] Therefore, an aspect of the present disclosure is to provide a refrigerator with a water purifying means utilizing an easily replaceable water filter.

[0009] Another aspect of the present disclosure is to provide a refrigerator with a water purifying means capable of allowing a user to easily check a lifespan of a water filter.

[0010] To achieve these and other advantages and in accordance with the purpose of this specification, as embodied and broadly described herein, a refrigerator is provided with a water purifying means, the refrigerator comprising a refrigerator door having a water supply passage along which water is supplied outside the refrigerator; a case detachably mounted to the refrigerator door such that at least part thereof is exposed outside the refrigerator door; and a water filter mounted to the case, and disposed at the refrigerator door such that water supplied along the water supply passage passes therethrough.

[0011] The water filter may be detachably mounted to the refrigerator door such that at least part thereof is exposed to the outside. This may allow separation or mounting of the water filter without requiring assembly of the refrigerator door. This may result in an easy exchange of the water filter.

[0012] A filter lifespan display unit configured to display a remaining lifespan of the water filter may be additionally installed on the surface of the water purifying means or the refrigerator door. This may allow a user to easily check a lifespan of the water filter without disassembling the water filter.

[0013] According to another aspect of the present disclosure, a refrigerator is provided with a water purifying means, the refrigerator comprising a refrigerator door having a water supply passage along which water is supplied outside the refrigerator; a dispenser provided at the refrigerator door, and configured to selectively supply water and ice; a water purifying means configured to purify water supplied through the water supply passage; a selecting means provided at the water purifying means, and configured to select water or ice to be supplied through the dispenser; and a controller configured to control water or ice selected by the selecting means to be supplied through the dispenser.

[0014] According to still another aspect of the present disclosure, a refrigerator is provided with a water purifying means, the refrigerator comprising a refrigerator door having a water supply passage along which water is supplied outside the refrigerator; a water filter configured to purify water supplied through the water supply passage; a fixing means configured to detachably fix the water filter to the refrigerator door, and to supply water purified by the water filter; and a water supply opening configured to supply water having passed through the water filter, outside the refrigerator door, wherein the water supply opening is formed at the fixing means.

[0015] The present disclosure has several advantages.

[0016] Firstly, the water filter may be mounted to the refrigerator door in a state of being partially exposed outside the refrigerator door. This allows a user to easily replace the water filter without disassembling the refrigerator.

[0017] Secondly, the lifespan of the water filter may be easily checked. This allows a user to determine whether or not to replace the water filter in a more convenient and precise manner.

[0018] Thirdly, the water filter may serve as a means for selecting water or ice to be supplied through the dispenser. This allows a user to manipulate the refrigerator in a more intuitive manner, and to simplify a manipulation panel provided at the refrigerator door.

[0019] Further scope of applicability of the present application will become more apparent from the detailed description given hereinafter. However, it should be understood that the detailed description and specific examples, while indicating preferred embodiments of the invention, are given by way of illustration only, since various changes and modifications within the spirit and scope of the invention will become apparent to those skilled in the art from the detailed description.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0020] The accompanying drawings, which are included to provide a further understanding of the invention and are incorporated in and constitute a part of this specification, illustrate exemplary embodiments and together with the description serve to explain the principles of the invention.

[0021] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a refrigerator with a water purifying means according to a first embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0022] FIGS. 2A and 2B are enlarged perspective views of a water purifying means according to the first embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0023] FIG. 3 is a sectional view taken along line 'III-III' in FIG. 2A.

[0024] FIG. 4 is a block diagram schematically showing a configuration of a first filter lifespan display unit according to the first embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0025] FIG. 5 is a flowchart showing an operation of the first filter lifespan display unit of FIG. 4.

[0026] FIGS. 6 and 7 are perspective views of a refrigerator with a water purifying means according to a second embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0027] FIG. 8 is a sectional view taken along line 'VIII-VIII' in FIG. 7.

[0028] FIG. 9 is a block diagram schematically showing a configuration of a second filter lifespan display unit according to the second embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0029] FIG. 10 is a perspective view showing a modification example of the second embodiment.

[0030] FIG. 11 is a perspective view showing another modification example of the second embodiment.

[0031] FIG. 12 is a perspective view of a refrigerator with a water purifying means according to a third embodiment of the present disclosure.

[0032] FIG. 13 is a sectional view taken along line 'XIII-XIII' in FIG. 12.

[0033] FIG. 14 is a block diagram schematically showing a configuration of a third filter lifespan display unit according to the third embodiment of the present disclosure.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0034] Description will now be given in detail of the exemplary embodiments, with reference to the accompanying drawings. For the sake of a brief description with reference to the drawings, the same or equivalent components will be provided with the same reference numbers, and description thereof will not be repeated.

[0035] Hereinafter, a refrigerator with a water purifying means according to the present disclosure will be explained in more detail with reference to the attached drawings.

[0036] Referring to FIGS. 1, 2A, 2B and 3, a refrigerator according to a first embodiment of the present disclosure comprises a refrigerator door 100 configured to open and close a refrigerator body 10, and a water purifying means 400 detachably installed at the refrigerator door 100. The refrigerator door 100 includes two upper doors hinge-coupled to the refrigerator body 10, and two drawer-type doors provided at a lower side. However, the present disclosure is not limited to this arrangement. For instance, two doors hinge-coupled to the refrigerator body may be arranged up and down, or right and left.

[0037] The water purifying means 400 is disposed on a front surface of the refrigerator door 100, and more specifically, at an upper part of a take-out opening 210 of a dispenser 200. Although not shown, an ice making chamber for making ice is installed on a rear surface of the refrigerator door 100. Ice made in the ice making chamber may be transferred by an ice transfer device such as an auger, and then may be dispensed through the take-out opening 210. The auger is operated by manipulation of buttons 220 of the dispenser 200. An ice supply pipe 230 is provided between the ice making chamber and the take-out opening 210, through which ice having been transferred from the ice making chamber is transmitted to the take-out opening 210.

[0038] A water supply passage 110 connected to a water storage unit (not shown) is installed at the refrigerator door 100, and is configured to supply water rather than ice. The water supply passage 110 includes a water inflow passage 111

extending between a water storage unit and the water filter 420, and a water discharge passage 112 extending between the water filter 420 and a water supply opening.

[0039] A filter installation unit 160 is formed at the refrigerator door 100. A first case 410 of the water purifying means is detachably inserted in the filter installation unit 160. As shown in FIG. 3, the water supply passage 110 is installed in the filter installation unit 160. A water filter 420 configured to filter supplied water is provided at the first case 410.

[0040] Referring to FIG. 3, an inner space of the first case 410 constitutes part of the water supply passage 110. Water supplied through the water supply passage 110 may pass through the water filter 420, and then may be discharged from the first case 410 to be supplied to a user.

[0041] The filter installation unit 160 is formed above the take-out opening 210 of the dispenser 200, and the first case 410 has a rectangular parallelepiped shape with an open upper surface. As shown in FIGS. 2A and 2B, the water purifying means 400 may be detachably mounted in the filter installation unit 160. More specifically, the water purifying means 400 may be pushed into the filter installation unit 160 for mounting, and may be withdrawn from the filter installation unit 160 for separation. This may allow a user to easily replace or check the water filter 420 without disassembling the refrigerator door 100.

[0042] Water purified by the water purifying means 400 may be discharged from the first case 410, and then may be supplied through an additional water outlet. Referring to FIG. 3, water may be supplied through a water supply unit 430 provided on a front surface of the first case 410. More specifically, in the present disclosure, the inner space of the first case 410 communicates with the water supply unit 430 so that water filtered by the water filter 420 may be supplied through the water supply unit 430.

[0043] Referring to FIG. 4, the water purifying means 400 is further provided with a first filter lifespan display unit 450. The first filter lifespan display unit 450 includes a first flow amount measuring unit 451, a first controller 452, and a display unit. The first flow amount measuring unit 451 is installed at the water supply passage 110, and is configured to measure an accumulated flow amount of water having passed through the water filter 420. The first controller 452 is configured to compare the measured accumulated flow amount with a preset reference flow amount. The display unit is electrically connected to the first controller 452, and includes a first light emitting device 453 that is turned on according to a comparison result. The first controller 452 is configured to control an operation of a first valve 454 for opening and closing the water supply passage 110.

[0044] FIG. 5 is a flowchart showing an operation of the first filter lifespan display unit of FIG. 4.

[0045] Referring to FIG. 5, when water supply and water purification are performed, the first flow amount measuring unit 451 measures an accumulated flow amount (Q) discharged out via the water filter 420 on the water supply passage 110, and transmits the measured accumulated flow amount (Q) to the first controller 452. First to third reference flow amounts and a limit flow amount preset according to the lifespan of the water filter are stored in the first controller 452. Here, the limit flow amount denotes a flow amount which can be supplied until the water filter is no longer of any use. The first to third reference flow amounts are set to be smaller than the limit flow amount.

[0046] The first controller 452 compares the measured accumulated flow amount with the first reference flow amount. If the measured accumulated flow amount is smaller than the first reference flow amount, the first controller 452 controls the first valve 452 to maintain an open state for normal water supply. On the other hand, if the measured accumulated flow amount is larger than the first reference flow amount, the first controller 452 controls the first light emitting device 453 to be turned on for display of a used degree of the water filter, and compares the measured accumulated flow amount with the second reference flow amount. If the measured accumulated flow amount is smaller than the second reference flow amount, the first controller 452 controls water supply to be normally performed. On the other hand, if the measured accumulated flow amount is larger than the second reference flow amount, the first controller 452 controls a second light emitting device to be turned on, and compares the measured accumulated flow amount with the third reference flow amount. If the measured accumulated flow amount is smaller than the third reference flow amount, the first controller 452 controls water supply to be normally performed. On the other hand, if the measured accumulated flow amount is larger than the third reference flow amount, the first controller 452 controls a third light emitting device to be turned on, and determines whether the measured accumulated flow amount has reached the limit flow amount. If the measured accumulated flow amount has reached the limit flow amount, the first controller 452 closes the first valve 454 to block a water discharge passage. The first controller 452 may send a filter replacement signal to the outside through an alarm generator or an additional LED.

[0047] Upon detection of replacement of the water filter 420 having reached the limit flow amount by another one, the first controller 452 initializes the accumulated flow amount. Referring to FIG. 5, 'Q' denotes a measured flow amount, 'Qs1' denotes a first reference flow amount, 'Qs2' denotes a second reference flow amount, 'Qs3' denotes a third reference flow amount, 'Qc' denotes a limit flow amount, 'Qs1 LED' denotes a first light emitting diode, 'Qs2 LED' denotes a second light emitting diode, and 'Qs3 LED' denotes a third light emitting diode.

[0048] Referring to FIGS. 6 to 9, a water purifying means 500 according to a second embodiment of the present disclosure is installed on a front surface of a refrigerator door 100, and is detachably mounted to a dispenser 300 installed on the front surface of the refrigerator door 100.

[0049] A water supply passage 130 is formed at the refrigerator door 100 and is configured to connect a water storage unit to a water supply opening 513. An ice supply pipe 330 is also formed at the refrigerator door 100 and is configured to connect an ice making chamber to an ice take-out opening 310.

[0050] A filter installation unit 340 is formed at the dispenser 300 so as to extend inwardly from the front surface of the refrigerator door 100. An inner space of the filter installation unit 340 communicates with the water supply passage 130.

[0051] The water purifying means 500 includes a second case 510, and a second water filter 520 fitted into the second case 510. The second case 510 is formed in a cylindrical shape, and includes a water supply region 511 and a filter region 512. The filter region 512 is configured to fit the second water filter 520 therein, and the water supply region 511 is a

region where a connection opening 514 and the water supply opening 513 facing the ice take-out opening 310 of the ice supply pipe 330 are formed.

[0052] The filter region 512 is connected to the water supply passage 130 by being fitted into the filter installation unit 340, and the water supply region 511 is exposed outside the filter installation unit 340.

[0053] Water supplied through the water supply passage 130 is discharged to the outside, through the water supply opening 513 of the water supply region 511 via the second water filter 520 inside the filter region 512. Ice having been transferred along the ice supply pipe 330 from the ice making chamber is dispensed to the outside through the ice take-out opening 310, the connection opening 514 and the water supply opening 513.

[0054] A water/ice selection button (not shown) may be installed at the refrigerator door 100, and a signal generated by manipulation of the water/ice selection button is transmitted to a second controller 552. The signal transmitted to the second controller 552 is used to control a first opening/closing valve 556 installed on the water supply passage 130, or a second opening/closing valve 554 installed on the ice supply pipe 330. More specifically, once the first opening/closing valve 556 is open, water purified by the water purifying means 500 is supplied. On the other hand, once the second opening/closing valve 554 is open, ice stored in the ice making chamber is supplied.

[0055] Since the water supply region 511 of the second case 510 is exposed outside the dispenser 300, the water supply region 511 may serve as a handle. This may allow the water purifying means 500 to be easily detachably mounted to the dispenser 300.

[0056] Like in the first embodiment, a filter lifespan display unit is provided in the second embodiment. The second filter lifespan display unit 550 includes a second flow amount measuring unit 551, a second controller 552, and a display unit. The second flow amount measuring unit 551 is installed at the water supply passage 130, and is configured to measure an accumulated flow amount of water having passed through the second water filter 520. The second controller 552 is configured to compare the measured accumulated flow amount with a preset reference flow amount. The display unit is turned on according to a comparison result by the second controller 552. The second flow amount measuring unit 551 may be installed in the second case 510.

[0057] The second filter lifespan display unit 550 includes a second light emitting device 553, which may include three light emitting devices, installed at one end of the second case 510. However, the present disclosure is not limited to this. More specifically, the second filter lifespan display unit 550 may include a light emitting bar having a lighting length variable according to a remaining lifespan of the water filter, or a light emitting panel for displaying a number corresponding to a remaining lifespan of the water filter.

[0058] The second light emitting device 553 may be installed on an outer circumference of the second case 510, as well as at the end of the second case 510. The number of the light emitting devices may be changed.

[0059] As shown in FIG. 11, the second filter lifespan display unit 550 may include a light emitting bar 553' disposed in a circular shape along the outer circumference of the second case 510. The operation of the second filter lifespan

display unit 550 may be understood with reference to that of the first filter lifespan display unit, and thus its detailed explanations will be omitted.

[0060] The water supply passage 130 includes a water inflow passage 131 extending between a water storage unit and the second water filter 520, and a water discharge passage 132 extending between the second water filter 520 and the water supply opening 513. Part of the water discharge passage 132 is disposed in the second case 510. As previously stated, the first opening/closing valve 556 is installed on the water supply passage 130. Water or ice may be supplied through the dispenser. Here, the ice may be supplied in the form of cubic ice, or ice pieces crushed by a cutter (not shown). A manipulation means for selecting water or ice to be supplied through the dispenser may be provided. This may be implemented by the second case 510. More specifically, the second case may be provided with buttons for selecting water, cubic ice, and ice pieces, respectively. The buttons may be provided at the end or outer circumference of the second case.

[0061] As shown in FIG. 10, water or ice may be selected by changing the position of the second case 510. That is, a selection region 591 for selecting water, cubic ice and ice pieces may be provided at one end of the second case 510. Under this configuration, once the second case has rotated, an object corresponding to a direction of 12 o'clock (one selected from water, cubic ice and ice pieces) is dispensed. More specifically, referring to FIG. 10, the end of the second case 510 is divided into three regions. Here, an object corresponding to a region facing an upper part of the filter installation unit 340 is dispensed. This may simplify a manipulation means, and may allow a user to select water or ice in a more intuitive manner. The regions may be provided with information on water, cubic ice and ice pieces. This information may be displayed in the form of characters, numbers, symbols, diagrams, etc.

[0062] A detection means (not shown) for detecting the position of the second case 510 is installed in the filter installation unit 340.

[0063] Referring to FIGS. 12 to 14, the third embodiment of the present disclosure will be explained. A water purifying means 600 according to the third embodiment of the present disclosure may be installed on a rear surface of a refrigerator door 100. More specifically, the water purifying means 600 may be installed on a lateral side of a door basket 170 installed on the rear surface of the refrigerator door 100. A water supply passage 140 extending between a water storage unit and a water supply opening 613 is disposed at the refrigerator door 100.

[0064] The water purifying means 600 is installed on the lateral side of the rear surface of the refrigerator door 100, and includes a third case 610. The third case 610 has an open upper end, and has an inner space connected to the water supply passage 140. A third water filter 620 is detachably mounted at the inner space of the third case 610. The third case 610 is provided with a water supply opening 611 extending downwardly.

[0065] A water supply button 630 is installed at a lower end of the third case 610, and is hinge-connected to one end of the third case 610. A water supply switch 640 is installed on a rear surface of the water supply button 630, and is configured to transmit a signal to a third controller 652 upon detection of pressing of the water supply button 630. A third valve 654 is installed on the water supply passage 140, and is configured

to open and close the water supply passage 140 according to whether the water supply switch 640 has generated a signal.

[0066] The third water filter 620 is fitted into the inner space of the third case 610 in an upright state, and is partially exposed to the outside. Due to installation on the rear surface of the refrigerator door 100, the water purifying means 600 is substantially disposed at an inner space of a refrigerator body. The water supply passage 140 connected to the inside of the third water filter 620 and the third case 610 maintains its temperature to be equal to a temperature of the inner space of the refrigerator. As a result, water supplied through the water supply opening 611 may maintain its temperature to be lower than room temperature.

[0067] The water purifying means 600 of the third embodiment may be provided with a third filter lifespan display unit 650. The third filter lifespan display unit 650 may be installed on a front surface of the refrigerator door 100, or on the surface of the third case 610.

[0068] The third filter lifespan display unit 650 according to the third embodiment includes a third flow amount measuring unit 651, a third controller 652, and a third light emitting device 653 including a plurality of light emitting devices. The third flow amount measuring unit 651 is configured to measure an accumulated flow amount of water having passed through the third water filter 620. The third controller 652 is configured to compare the measured accumulated flow amount with a preset reference flow amount. The third light emitting devices 653 are turned on according to a comparison result by the third controller 652. The third light emitting devices 653 may be installed on the front surface of the refrigerator door 100, or on the surface of the third case 610.

[0069] The operation of the third filter lifespan display unit 650 may be understood with reference to that of the first filter lifespan display unit 450, and thus its detailed explanations will be omitted.

[0070] The foregoing embodiments and advantages are merely exemplary and are not to be construed as limiting the present disclosure. The present teachings can be readily applied to other types of apparatuses. This description is intended to be illustrative, and not to limit the scope of the claims. Many alternatives, modifications, and variations will be apparent to those skilled in the art. The features, structures, methods, and other characteristics of the exemplary embodiments described herein may be combined in various ways to obtain additional and/or alternative exemplary embodiments.

[0071] As the present features may be embodied in several forms without departing from the characteristics thereof, it should also be understood that the above-described embodiments are not limited by any of the details of the foregoing description, unless otherwise specified, but rather should be construed broadly within its scope as defined in the appended claims, and therefore all changes and modifications that fall within the metes and bounds of the claims, or equivalents of such metes and bounds, are therefore intended to be embraced by the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A refrigerator, comprising:
 - a refrigerator body;
 - a refrigerator door provided to the refrigerator body;
 - a water supply passage provided to the refrigerator door and along which water is supplied outside of the refrigerator door;

a case detachably mounted to the refrigerator door, the case having an exterior portion exposed to the outside of the refrigerator door; and

a water filter mounted to the case, the water filter configured to filter water supplied along the water supply passage.

2. The refrigerator of claim 1, wherein the case is detachably mounted to a filter installation unit of the refrigerator door, and wherein the case includes a water supply unit for discharging water having passed through the water filter.

3. The refrigerator of claim 2, wherein the water filter is disposed proximate an outlet of the water supply passage.

4. The refrigerator of claim 1, wherein the case includes a filter region communicated with the water supply passage, and a water supply region having a water supply opening, wherein the water filter is detachably installed at the filter region, and

wherein the water supply region is disposed so as to be exposed outside of the refrigerator.

5. The refrigerator of claim 4, wherein the case is detachably mounted to a filter installation unit of the refrigerator door, and

wherein the filter region is detachably mounted to the filter installation unit.

6. The refrigerator of claim 4, further comprising:

a dispenser provided to the refrigerator door; and

a selection device provided on an outer surface of the case for selecting a type of an object to be supplied through the dispenser.

7. The refrigerator of claim 4, further comprising a filter installation unit and a dispenser provided to the refrigerator door,

wherein the case is detachably mounted to the filter installation unit,

wherein the case is rotatably installed in the filter installation unit, and

wherein a type of object to be supplied through the dispenser is determined according to a rotation angle of the case.

8. The refrigerator of claim 7, wherein the case includes a plurality of selection regions corresponding to objects to be supplied through the dispenser, and a type of object to be supplied through the dispenser is determined by its corresponding selection region being located at a preset position with respect to the filter installation unit.

9. The refrigerator of claim 8, wherein each of the selection regions is displayed with information on a corresponding object.

10. The refrigerator of claim 1, wherein a dispenser for supplying water or ice is provided to the refrigerator door, and the case and the water filter are disposed above a take-out opening of the dispenser.

11. The refrigerator of claim 1, wherein a filter lifespan display unit is provided at the case.

12. The refrigerator of claim 10, wherein the filter lifespan display unit includes:

a flow amount measuring unit configured to measure an accumulated flow amount of water having passed through the water filter;

a controller configured to compare the measured accumulated flow amount with a preset reference flow amount; and

a display unit configured to display a comparison result by the controller.

13. The refrigerator of claim 12, wherein the display unit includes a plurality of light emitting devices, and the light emitting devices are disposed on the surface of the case.

14. The refrigerator of claim 12, wherein the case is cylindrical, and the display unit has a ring shape to encompass an outer circumferential surface of the case.

15. A refrigerator, comprising:

a refrigerator body;

a refrigerator door provided to the refrigerator body;

a water supply passage provided to the refrigerator door and along which water is supplied outside of the refrigerator door;

a case disposed on a rear surface of the refrigerator door, the case being exposed to an inner space of the refrigerator;

a water filter detachably mounted to the case, the water filter having one or more parts exposed outside of the case, the water filter configured to filter water supplied along the water supply passage; and

a filter lifespan display unit configured to display a remaining lifespan of the water filter.

16. The refrigerator of claim 15, wherein the case has an open upper end, and a portion of the water filter is inserted into the open upper end of the case.

17. The refrigerator of claim 15, wherein the filter lifespan display unit includes:

a flow amount measuring unit configured to measure an accumulated flow amount of water having passed through the water filter;

a controller configured to compare the measured accumulated flow amount with a preset reference flow amount; and

a display unit provided at the case and configured to display a comparison result by the controller.

18. The refrigerator of claim 15, wherein the filter lifespan display unit includes:

a flow amount measuring unit configured to measure an accumulated flow amount of water having passed through the water filter;

a controller configured to compare the measured accumulated flow amount with a preset reference flow amount; and

a display unit provided on a front surface of the refrigerator door and configured to display a comparison result by the controller.

19. The refrigerator of claim 15, wherein the refrigerator door includes at least one basket on a rear surface thereof, and the case is disposed on a side surface of the basket.

20. The refrigerator of claim 15, further comprising a water supply opening provided on a bottom surface of the case and configured to discharge water filtered by the water filter therethrough.

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