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DESCRIPTION

Technical Field

[0001] One aspect of the present invention relates to an assembly structure.

Background Art

[0002] Assembly toys with which assembly structures of various shapes can be coupled to produce arbitrary forms have attracted widespread popularity as intellect- or emotion-developing toys, among not only children but also adults. For example, Patent Literature 1 discloses an assembly structure including cylindrical parts with an end closed on one side. In the assembly structure, each of the cylindrical part has three cylindrical protrusions protruding from the end on the one side and a cylindrical boss portion within the cylindrical part. The assembly structure can be coupled to another assembly structure by fitting three protrusions of the other assembly structure between an inner peripheral surface of the cylindrical part and the boss portion.

Citation List

Patent Literature

[0003] Patent Literature 1: Japanese Unexamined Patent Publication No. 2016-101219

Summary of Invention

Technical Problem

[0004] The assembly toy as described above has a limitation of assembly methods of the assembly structure.

[0005] One aspect of the present invention has an object to provide an assembly structure capable of various assembly methods.

Solution to Problem

[0006] An assembly structure according to the invention is defined in claim 1. An assembly structure according to one aspect of the present invention is an assembly structure including a cylindrical part with an end closed on one side. The cylindrical part has three columnar protrusions that protrude from the end to one side and a cylindrical boss portion that is positioned within the cylindrical part such that three protrusions of another assembly structure are fitted between the boss portion and an inner peripheral surface of the cylindrical part. The inner diameter of the cylindrical part is smaller than the sum of double the outer diameter of the protrusion and the outer diameter of the boss portion. When one protrusion of the other assembly structure is arranged on the outside of the cylindrical part, the two remaining protrusions of the other assembly structure are fitted between the boss portion and the inner peripheral surface of the cylindrical part.

[0007] In the assembly structure, the inner diameter of the cylindrical part is smaller than the sum of double the outer diameter of the protrusion and the outer diameter of the boss portion. That is, the outer diameter of the protrusion is larger than the distance between the inner peripheral surface of the cylindrical part and the boss portion. Therefore, when the protrusions of another assembly structure are fitted between the inner peripheral surface of the cylindrical part and the boss portion, the protrusion is sandwiched between the inner peripheral surface of the cylindrical part and the boss portion. Accordingly, the cylindrical part can be stably coupled to the cylindrical part of the other assembly structure. In addition, when one protrusion of the other assembly structure is arranged on the outside of the cylindrical part, the two remaining protrusions of the other assembly structure are fitted between the boss portion and the inner peripheral surface of the cylindrical part. In this manner, the cylindrical part can be stably coupled to the cylindrical part of the other assembly structure even by a method other than the method of fitting all three protrusions of the other assembly structure, thereby achieving various assembly methods.

[0008] In the assembly structure according to one aspect of the present invention, when two protrusions of the other assembly structure are fitted between the boss portion and the inner peripheral surface of the cylindrical part, the one remaining protrusion of the other assembly structure may be in contact with the outside of the cylindrical part. In this case, the protrusions of the other assembly structures are in contact with both the inside and outside of the cylindrical part. Accordingly, the cylindrical part can be more stably coupled to the cylindrical part of the other assembly structure.

[0009] In the assembly structure according to one aspect of the present invention, when one protrusion of the other assembly structure is arranged on the outside of the cylindrical part and the two remaining protrusions of the other assembly structure are fitted between the boss portion and the inner peripheral surface of the cylindrical part, the cylindrical part may rotate around a central axis of the cylindrical part as an axis of rotation with respect to the other assembly structure. In this case, for example, the assembly structure can further help develop children's intellect and emotion.

[0010] In the assembly structure according to one aspect of the present invention, as seen from one side, the three protrusions may be arranged such that the centers of the three protrusions constitute the peaks of a regular triangle and the central axis of the cylindrical part passes through the center of gravity of the regular triangle. In this case, it is possible to arbitrarily select two of the three protrusions of another assembly structure to be fitted between the boss portion and the inner peripheral surface of the cylindrical part.

[0011] The assembly structure according to one aspect of the present invention may include a further cylindrical part having the same shape as the cylindrical part and a connection part connecting the pair of cylindrical parts. In this case, the assembly structure includes the pair of cylindrical parts to allow further various assembly methods.

Advantageous Effects of Invention

[0012] The assembly structure according to one aspect of the present invention allows various assembly methods.

Brief Description of Drawings

[0013]

FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an assembly structure according to an embodiment seen from an obliquely upward direction.

FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the assembly structure illustrated in FIG. 1 seen from an obliquely downward direction.

FIG. 3 is a top view of the assembly structure illustrated in FIG. 1.

FIG. 4 is a bottom view of the assembly structure illustrated in FIG. 1.

FIG. 5 is a diagram for describing interference widths.

FIG. 6 is a plan view of the assembly structure coupled to another assembly structure.

FIG. 7 is a diagram for describing interference widths.

FIG. 8 is a plan view of an assembly structure coupled to another assembly structure according to an example modification.

Description of Embodiment

[0014] An embodiment according to one aspect of the present invention will be described below in detail with reference to the accompanying drawings. In the following description, identical or equivalent elements will be given the same reference signs, and duplicated explanations thereof will be omitted.

[0015] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of an assembly structure according to one embodiment as seen from an obliquely upward direction. FIG. 2 is a perspective view of the assembly structure illustrated in FIG. 1 as seen from an obliquely downward direction. FIG. 3 is a top view of the assembly structure illustrated in FIG. 1. FIG. 4 is a bottom view of the assembly structure illustrated in FIG. 1. An assembly structure 10 according to one embodiment illustrated in FIGS. 1 to 4 is used as an assembly toy together with other assembly structures 10 to be coupled. The other assembly structures 10 have the same shape as the assembly structure 10, for example. The material for the assembly structure 10 can be selected from various viewpoints such as strength, durability, or manufacturing cost. The material for the assembly structure 10 may be a resin such as ABS resin or PLA resin, for example.

[0016] The assembly structure 10 includes a pair of cylindrical parts 11 and a connection part 12. The paired cylindrical parts 11 are cylindrical members with one end 11a closed in the axial direction. The paired cylindrical parts 11 have the same shape. The paired cylindrical parts 11 are arranged axially parallel to each other. The cylindrical parts 11 serve as coupling parts when the assembly structure 10 is coupled to another assembly structure 10.

[0017] The connection part 12 connects the paired cylindrical parts 11. An axial length of the connection part 12 is almost half an axial length of the cylindrical part 11. The connection part 12 has a pair of side surfaces 12a extending from the outer peripheral surface of one cylindrical part 11 to the outer peripheral surface of the other cylindrical part 11. The paired side surfaces 12a are on opposite sides from each other. Each of the paired side surfaces 12a is formed in a concave arc shaped face.

[0018] Each of the paired side surfaces 12a has an arced surface formed at a central angle of 90° with the same diameter as that of the outer peripheral surface of the cylindrical part 11. The distance between the paired side surfaces 12a is shortest at the middle point between the paired cylindrical parts 11. The shortest distance between the paired side surfaces 12a is identical to the separation distance between the paired cylindrical parts 11. Accordingly, the assembly structure 10 and another assembly structure 10 can be coupled together in a cross shape by turning the assembly structure 10 upside down relative to other assembly structure 10, rotating them 90° relative to each other, and approaching them together in such a manner that the connection parts 12 overlap each other.

[0019] Each of the cylindrical parts 11 has three protrusions 13 and a boss portion 14. The three protrusions 13 are columnar members protruding from the end 11a toward one axial side. In one embodiment, the protrusions 13 are hollow columnar members. Alternatively, the protrusions 13 may be solid columnar members. The three protrusions 13 have the same

shape, for example. The boss portion 14 is a cylindrical member protruding from the end 11a toward the other axial side. The axial length of the boss portion 14 is equal to the axial length of the cylindrical part 11. The boss portion 14 has a central axis aligned to the central axis of the cylindrical part 11 and is positioned in the cylindrical part 11. To couple the assembly structure 10 to another assembly structure 10, three protrusions 13 of the other assembly structure 10 are fitted between the outer peripheral surface of the boss portion 14 and an inner peripheral surface of the cylindrical part 11 of the assembly structure 10.

[0020] Each of the boss portions 14 has three flat face portions 15 where an inner peripheral surface of the boss portion 14 is flat and three curved face portions 16 where the inner peripheral surface of the boss portion 14 is curved. The three flat face portions 15 and the three curved face portions 16 are alternately arranged in the circumferential direction of the boss portion 14. The thickness of the curved face portions 16 in the radial direction takes on a constant value, and the thickness of the flat face portions 15 in the radial direction is larger than the constant value.

[0021] In the following description, one side of the cylindrical part 11 in the axial direction will also be called the upper side and the other side in the axial direction of the same will also be called the lower side. As seen from the upper side, the three protrusions 13 are arranged such that centers 13a of the three protrusions 13 constitute the peaks of a regular triangle, and the center of gravity G of the regular triangle overlaps the center of the cylindrical part 11. As seen from the upper side, it can be said that the centers 13a of the three protrusions 13 are positioned on a virtual circle c1 centered on the center of gravity G and having a radius equal to the distance between the center of gravity G and the centers 13a.

[0022] FIG. 5 is a diagram for describing interference widths. Referring to FIG. 5, a top view of the assembly structure 10 and a bottom view of another assembly structure 10 overlap each other in such a manner that the centers of the cylindrical parts 11 align to each other. The other assembly structures 10 are the same in shape as the assembly structure 10, and thus FIG. 5 is equivalent to a view of an overlap between FIGS. 3 and 4. As illustrated in FIG. 5, the protrusions 13 of the other assembly structure 10 are formed to interfere with the inner periphery of the cylindrical part 11 and the outer periphery of the boss portion 14.

[0023] By the interferences, the inner diameter of the cylindrical part 11 is smaller than the sum of double the outer diameter of the protrusion 13 and the outer diameter of the boss portion 14. That is, in the assembly structure 10 and the other assembly structure 10 not coupled to each other as illustrated in FIGS. 3 to 5, when the inner diameter of the cylindrical part 11 is designated as d_1 , the outer diameter of the protrusion 13 as d_2 , the outer diameter of the boss portion 14 as d_3 , the width of a portion of the protrusion 13 in the radial direction interfering with the cylindrical part 11 (interference width) as α_1 , and the width of a portion of the protrusions 13 in the radial direction interfering with the boss portion 14 (interference width) as α_2 , d_1 can be expressed as follows:

$$d_1 = 2d_2 + d_3 - 2\alpha_1 - 2\alpha_2$$

[0024] Therefore, when the assembly structure 10 and another assembly structure 10 are coupled to each other, the assembly structure 10 and the other assembly structure 10 deform elastically as a result of the interferences. Accordingly, the protrusions 13 of the other assembly structure 10 are sandwiched between the inner peripheral surface of the cylindrical part 11 and the outer peripheral surface of the boss portion 14, whereby the cylindrical part 11 of the assembly structure 10 can be stably coupled to the cylindrical part 11 of the other assembly structure 10. The interference widths α_1 and α_2 can be set to 0.02 to 0.08 mm, for example.

[0025] As illustrated in FIG. 4, when the outer diameter of the cylindrical part 11 is designated as d_4 and the wall thickness (thickness in the radial direction) of the cylindrical part 11 as t , d_4 can be expressed as follows:

$$d_4 = d_1 + 2t$$

[0026] As illustrated in FIG. 3, when the diameter of the virtual circle c_1 is designated as d_5 and the diameter of a circle c_2 circumscribed around the three protrusions 13 as d_6 , d_5 and d_6 can be expressed as follows:

$$d_5 = d_4 - 2t - d_2 + 2\alpha_1$$

$$d_6 = d_1 + 2\alpha_1 = d_5 + d_2 - 2\alpha_1$$

[0027] FIG. 6 is a plan view of the assembly structure coupled to another assembly structure. Referring to FIG. 6, the assembly structure 10 is arranged on the lower side and the other assembly structure 10 is arranged on the upper side. As illustrated in FIG. 6, when the assembly structure 10 and the other assembly structure 10 are coupled together, one of the protrusions 13 of the other assembly structure 10 is arranged on the outside of the cylindrical part 11 of the assembly structure 10, and the two remaining protrusions 13 of the other assembly structure 10 are fitted between the outer peripheral surface of the boss portion 14 and the inner peripheral surface of the cylindrical part 11 of the assembly structure 10. In this manner, the cylindrical part 11 can be stably coupled to the cylindrical part 11 of the other assembly structure 10 by a method other than the method of fitting all three protrusions 13 of the other assembly structure 10, thereby achieving various assembly methods. Accordingly, the assembly structure 10 can help further develop children's intellect and emotion.

[0028] The dimensions can be set as follows: $d_1 = 16.08$ mm, $d_2 = 4.70$ mm, $d_3 = 6.73$ mm, $d_4 = 18.40$ mm, $d_5 = 11.4$ mm, $d_6 = 16.10$ mm, $t = 1.1$ to 1.2 mm, for example.

[0029] When two of the protrusions 13 of the other assembly structure 10 are fitted between the boss portion 14 and the inner peripheral surface of the cylindrical part 11, the one remaining protrusion 13 of the other assembly structure 10 is in contact with the outer periphery of the cylindrical part 11 of the assembly structure 10. In this manner, the three protrusions 13 of the other assembly structure 10 are in contact with both the inside and

outside of the cylindrical part 11 of the assembly structure 10. Accordingly, the cylindrical part 11 of the assembly structure 10 can be coupled more stably to the cylindrical part 11 of the other assembly structure 10.

[0030] When one of the protrusions 13 of the other assembly structure 10 is arranged on the outside of the cylindrical part 11 of the assembly structure 10 and the two remaining protrusions 13 of the other assembly structure 10 are fitted between the outer peripheral surface of the boss portion 14 and the inner peripheral surface of the cylindrical part 11 of the assembly structure 10, the cylindrical part 11 rotates around the central axis of the cylindrical part 11 as an axis of rotation with respect to the other assembly structure 10. In this case, as seen from the upper side, center-to-center distance d_7 between the cylindrical part 11 of the assembly structure 10 and the cylindrical part 11 of another assembly structure 10 is equal to the center-to-center distance between the cylindrical part 11 and the protrusion 13, that is, the radius of the virtual circle c_1 ($d_5/2$).

[0031] FIG. 7 is a diagram for describing interference widths. Referring to FIG. 7, a top view of the assembly structure 10 and a bottom view of another assembly structure 10 overlap each other. The assembly structure and the other assembly structure illustrated in FIG. 7 are not yet coupled to each other. As illustrated in FIG. 7, one of the protrusions 13 of the other assembly structure 10 is formed to interfere with the outer periphery of the cylindrical part 11 of the assembly structure 10. When the interference width is designated as α_3 and d_7 is equal to $d_5/2$ as described above, the following relation holds. The interference width α_3 can be set to 0.02 to 0.08 mm, for example.

$$d_4/2 = d_5 - d_2/2 + \alpha_3$$

where $d_4/2$ corresponds to the radius of the outer peripheral surface of the cylindrical part 11, d_5 to double the center-to-center distance d_7 , and $d_2/2$ corresponds to the radius of the outer peripheral surface of the protrusion 13.

[0032] The present invention is not limited to the foregoing embodiment but can be modified in various manners.

[0033] FIG. 8 is a plan view of an assembly structure coupled to another assembly structure according to a modification example. As illustrated in FIG. 8, an assembly structure 10A according to the example modification is different from the assembly structure 10 in the arrangement of the three protrusions 13. In the assembly structure 10A as well, when one of protrusions 13 of another assembly structure 10A is arranged on the outside of the cylindrical part 11 of the assembly structure 10A, the two remaining protrusions 13 of the other assembly structure 10A are fitted between the outer peripheral surface of the boss portion 14 and the inner peripheral surface of the cylindrical part 11 of the assembly structure 10A. In this manner, in the assembly structure 10A as well, the cylindrical part 11 can be stably coupled to the cylindrical part 11 of the other assembly structure 10A by a method other than the method of fitting all three protrusions 13 of the other assembly structure 10A, thereby achieving various assembly methods.

[0034] Each of the assembly structures 10 and 10A includes at least one cylindrical part 11.

Reference Signs List

[0035]

10, 10A

Assembly structure

11

Cylindrical part

12

Connection part

13

Protrusion

14

Boss portion

REFERENCES CITED IN THE DESCRIPTION

Cited references

This list of references cited by the applicant is for the reader's convenience only. It does not form part of the European patent document. Even though great care has been taken in compiling the references, errors or omissions cannot be excluded and the EPO disclaims all liability in this regard.

Patent documents cited in the description

- JP2016101219A [0003]

P A T E N T K R A V

1. Montagestruktur (10), omfattende en cylindrisk del (11) med en ende (11a) lukket på en side, hvor den cylindriske del (11) omfatter:

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tre søjleformede fremspring (13), som rager frem fra enden (11a) mod en side; og

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et cylindrisk navafsnit (14), som er positioneret inde i den cylindriske del (11) således, at de tre fremspring (13) af en anden montagestruktur (10) i brug er indpasset mellem navafsnittet (14) og en indre omkredsflade af den cylindriske del (11) for at koble montagestrukturen (10) til den anden montagestruktur (10), **kendetegnet ved, at** navafsnittet (14) har en flerhed af flade overfladeafsnit (15), hvor en indre omkredsflade af navafsnittet (14) er flad, og en flerhed af buede overfladeafsnit (16), hvor den indre omkredsflade af navafsnittet (14) er buet, og

15

hvor flerheden af flade overfladeafsnit (15) og flerheden af buede overfladeafsnit (16) er skiftevis anbragt i en omkredsretning af navafsnittet (14).

2. Montagestruktur ifølge krav 1,

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hvor det ene tilbageværende fremspring af den anden montagestruktur, når to fremspring af den anden montagestruktur er indpasset mellem navafsnittet og den indre omkredsflade af den cylindriske del, er i kontakt med ydersiden af den cylindriske del.

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3. Montagestruktur ifølge krav 1 eller 2, hvor den cylindriske del, når et fremspring af den anden montagestruktur er anbragt på ydersiden af den cylindriske del, og de to tilbageværende fremspring af den anden montagestruktur er indpasset mellem navafsnittet og den indre omkredsflade af den cylindriske del, roterer om en central akse af den cylindriske del som en rotationsakse i forhold til den anden montagestruktur.

30

4. Montagestruktur ifølge et hvilket som helst af kravene 1 til 3, hvor de tre fremspring, set fra den ene side, er anbragt således, at midtpunkter af de tre fremspring udgør spidserne af en regulær trekant, og midteraksen af den cylindriske del passerer gennem et tyngdepunkt af den regulære trekant.

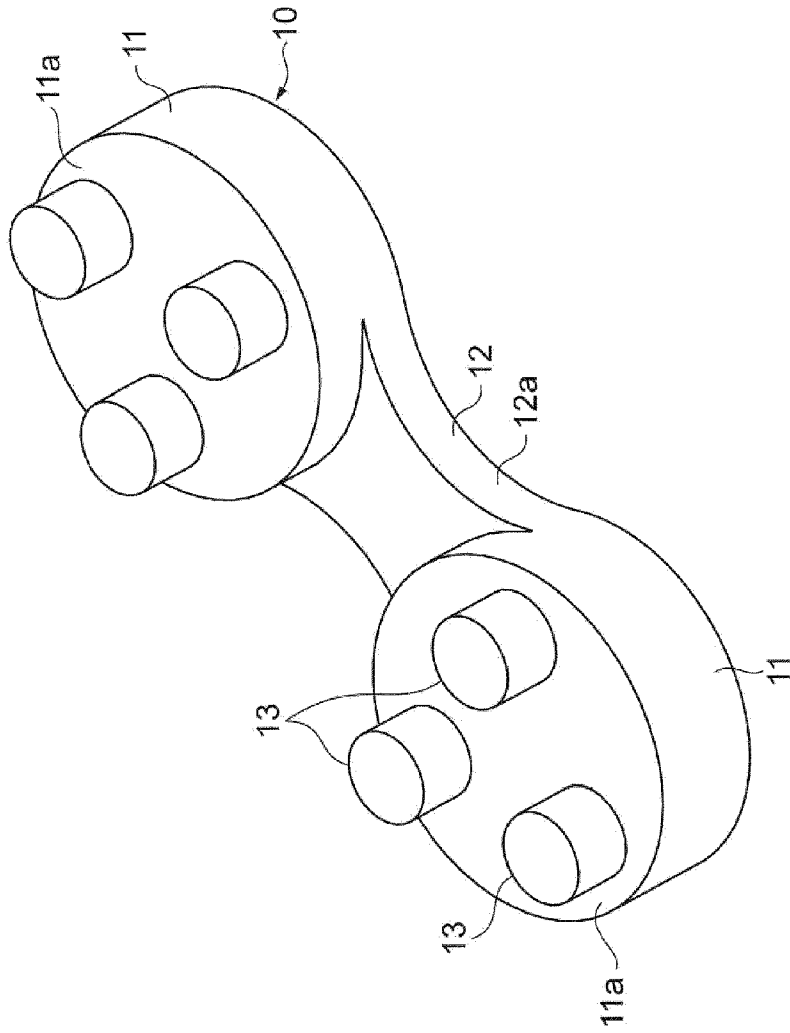
5

5. Montagestruktur ifølge et hvilket som helst af kravene 1 til 4, som endvidere omfatter en anden cylindrisk del med den samme form som den cylindriske del og en forbindelsesdel (12), som forbinder parret af cylindriske dele.

10

6. Montagestruktur ifølge et hvilket som helst af kravene 1 til 5, hvor en tykkelse af hver af flærheden af flade overfladeafsnit i en radial retning er større end en tykkelse af hver af flærheden af buede overfladeafsnit i den radiale retning.

DRAWINGS

Fig.1

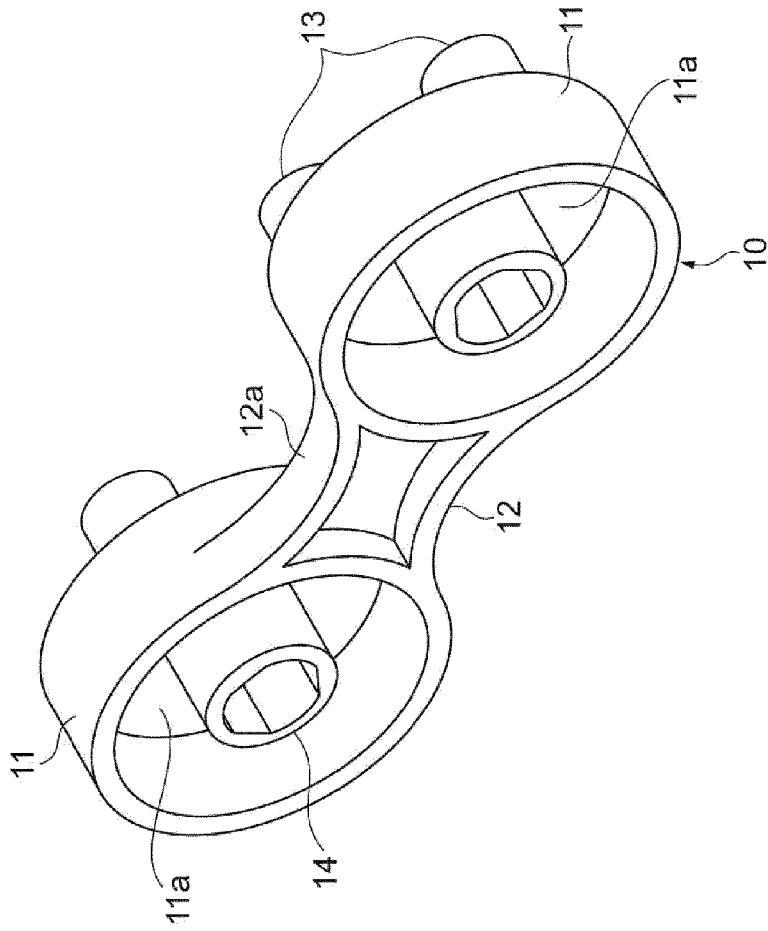
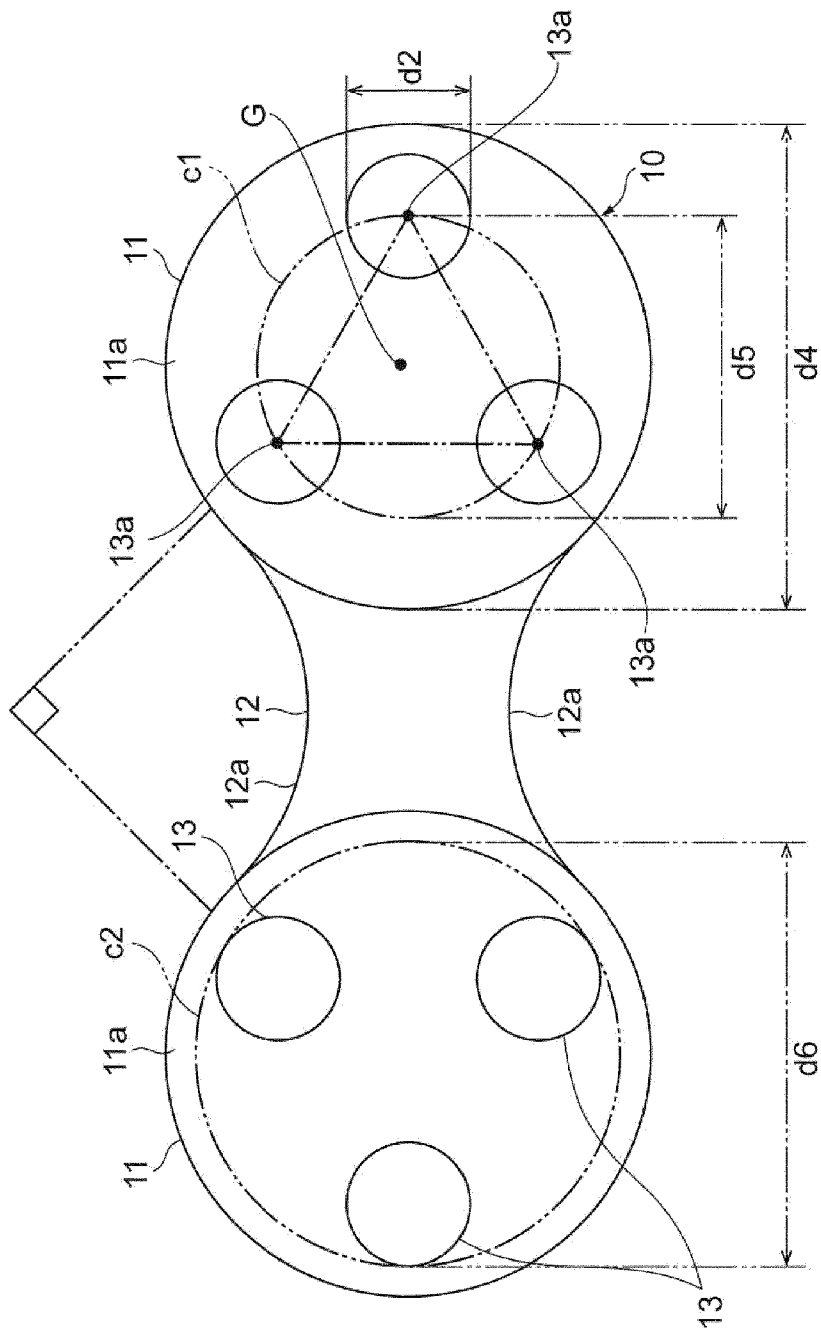
**Fig. 2**

Fig.3



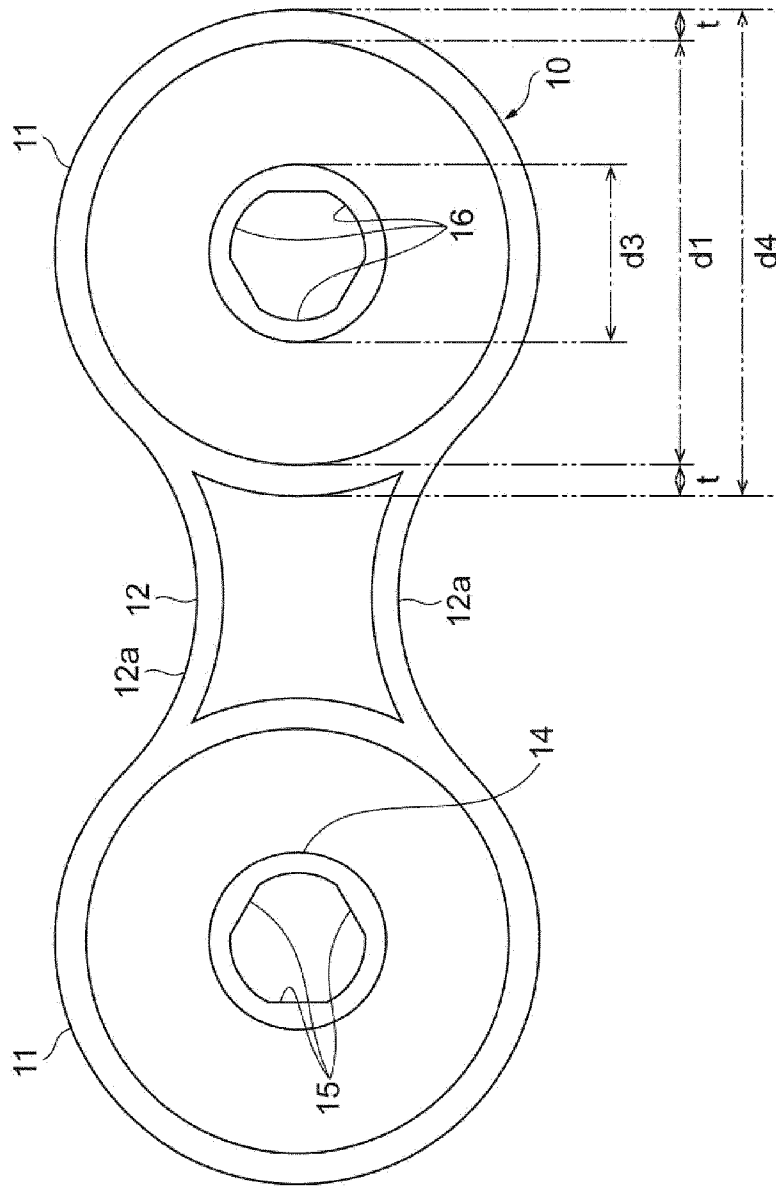
**Fig.4**

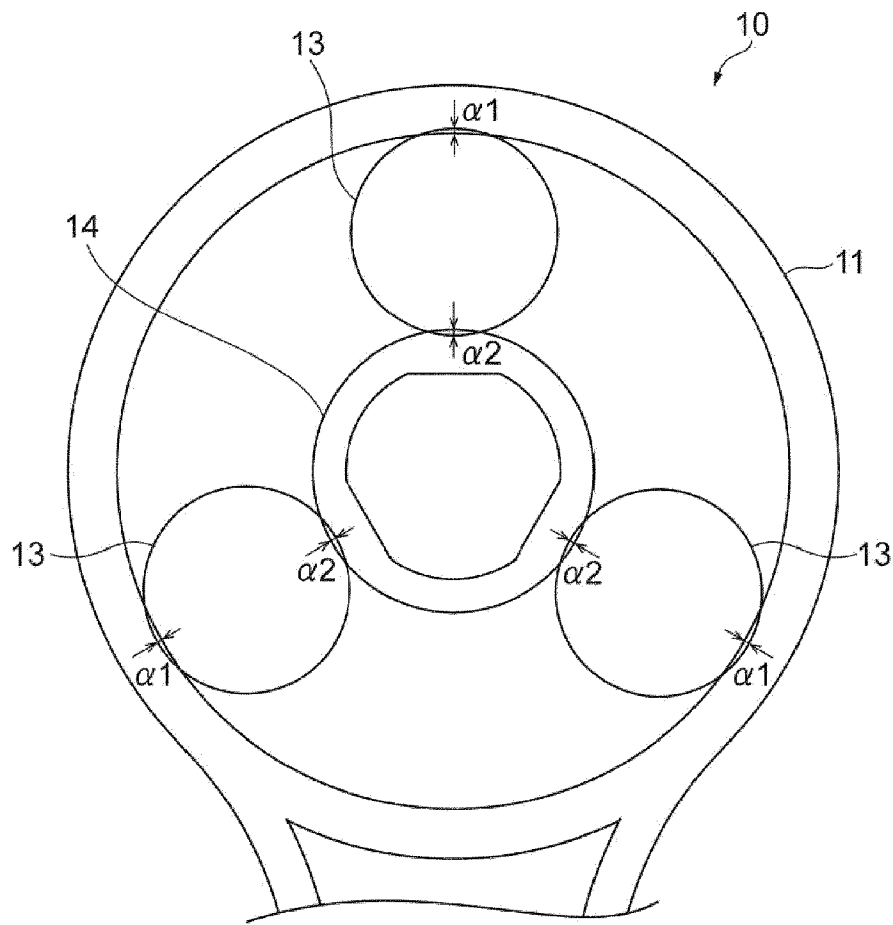
Fig.5

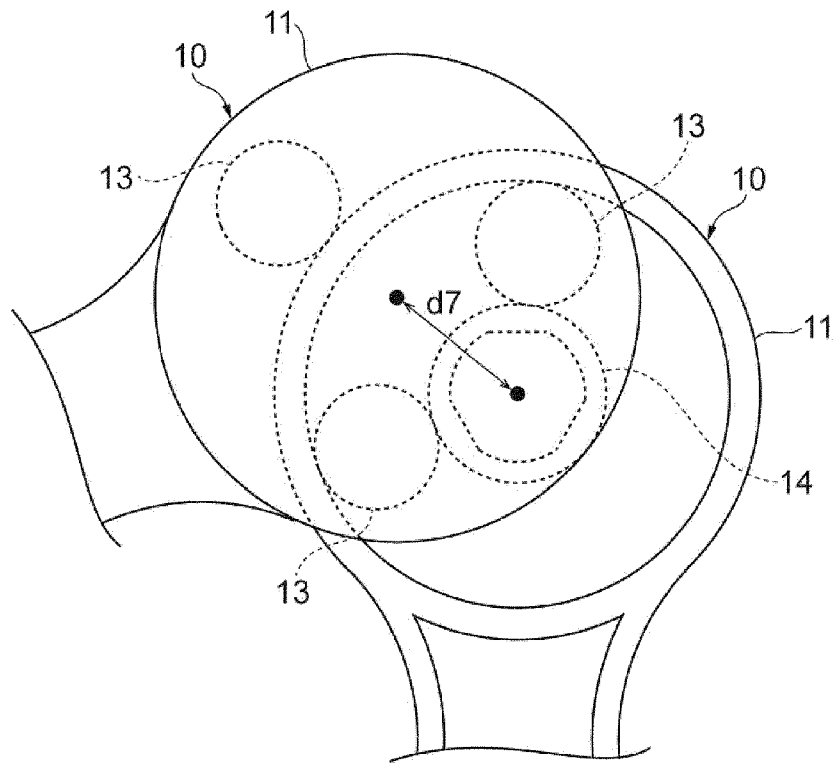
Fig.6

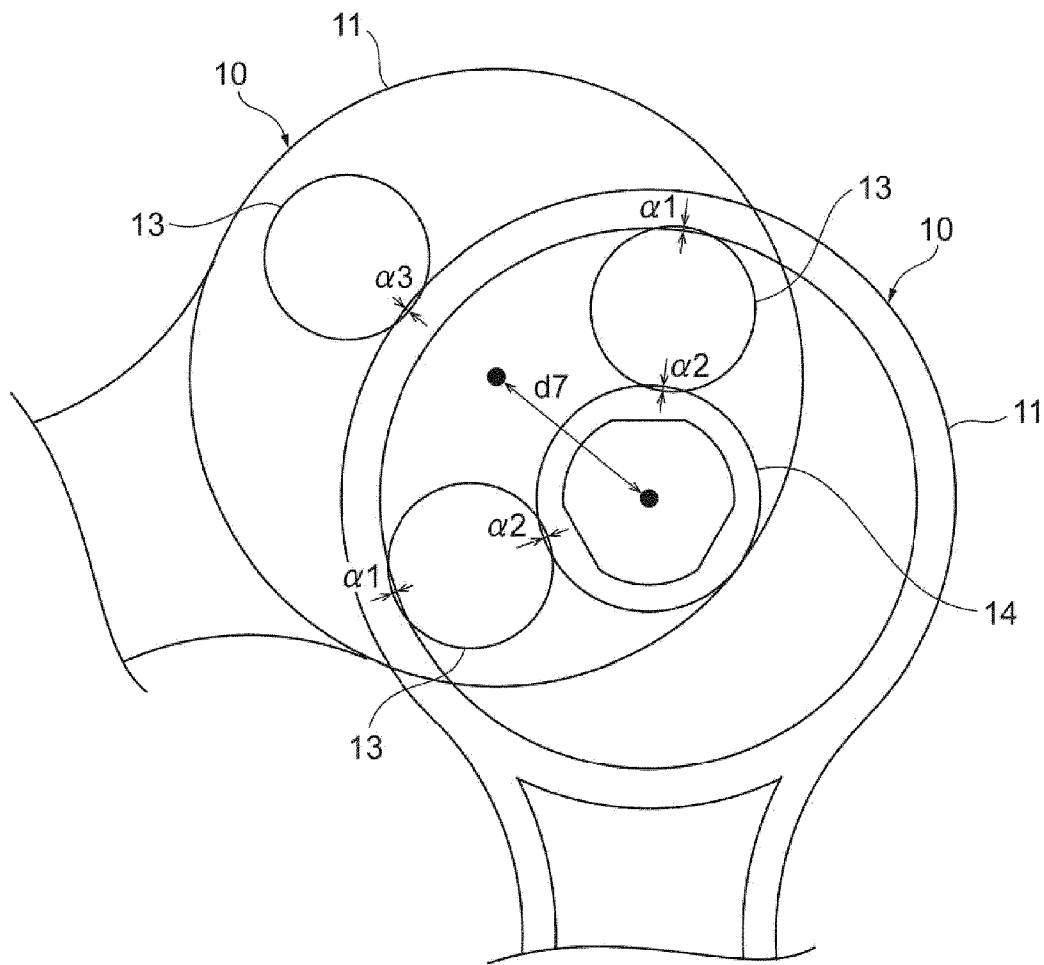
Fig.7

Fig.8