



US 20060027434A1

(19) **United States**

(12) **Patent Application Publication**

Capito

(10) **Pub. No.: US 2006/0027434 A1**

(43) **Pub. Date:**

Feb. 9, 2006

(54) **POSITIVE CLUTCH WITH STAGGERED TEETH HEIGHT**

(52) U.S. Cl. 192/69.83; 192/69.82; 192/108

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(57) **ABSTRACT**

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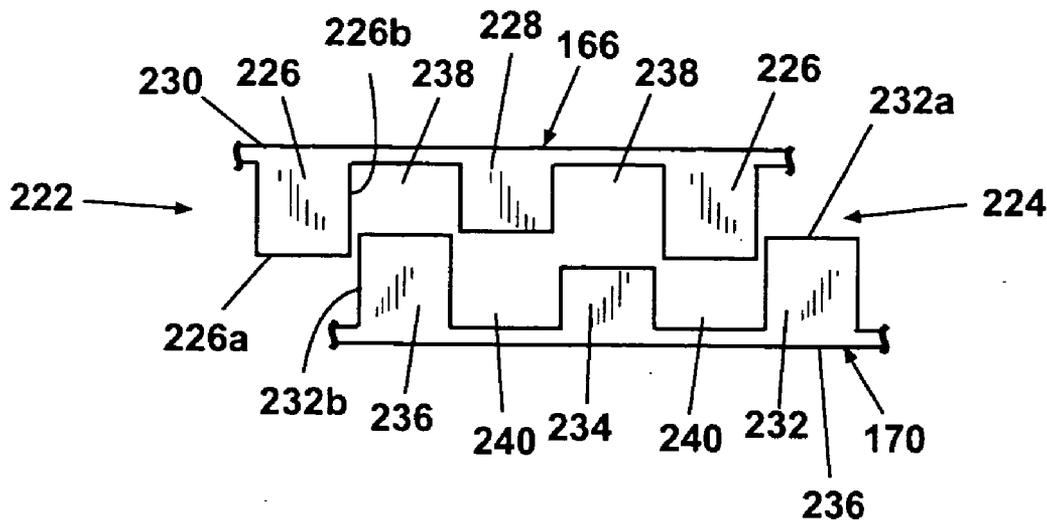
(21) Appl. No.: **10/912,776**

The present invention includes a positive clutch having a first clutch ring and a second clutch ring. The positive clutch further includes a first plurality of teeth connected to the first clutch ring. The first plurality of teeth includes a first set of teeth and a second set of teeth. The first set of teeth is taller than said second set of teeth. The staggered tooth height configuration provides a larger effective engagement area with less tooth lash.

(22) Filed: **Aug. 4, 2004**

Publication Classification

(51) **Int. Cl.**
F16D 11/10 (2006.01)



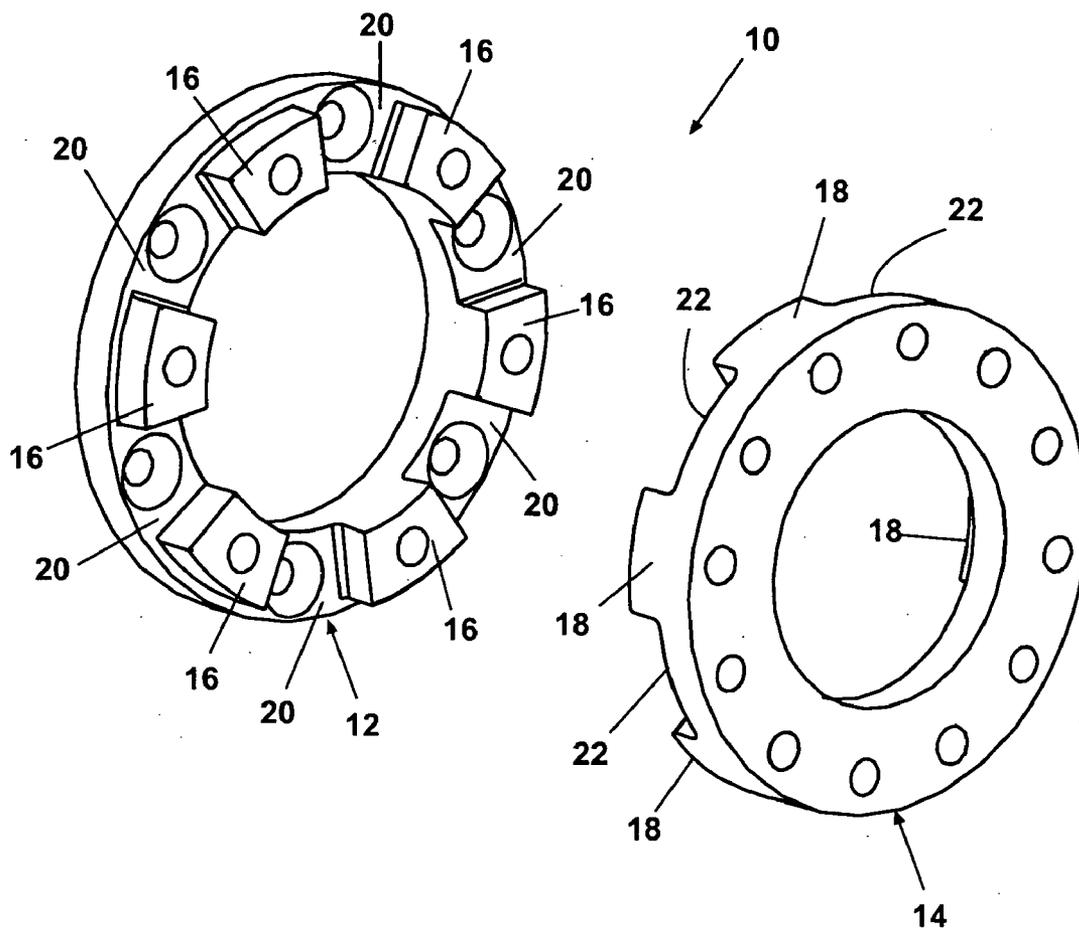


Fig. 1 (PRIOR ART)

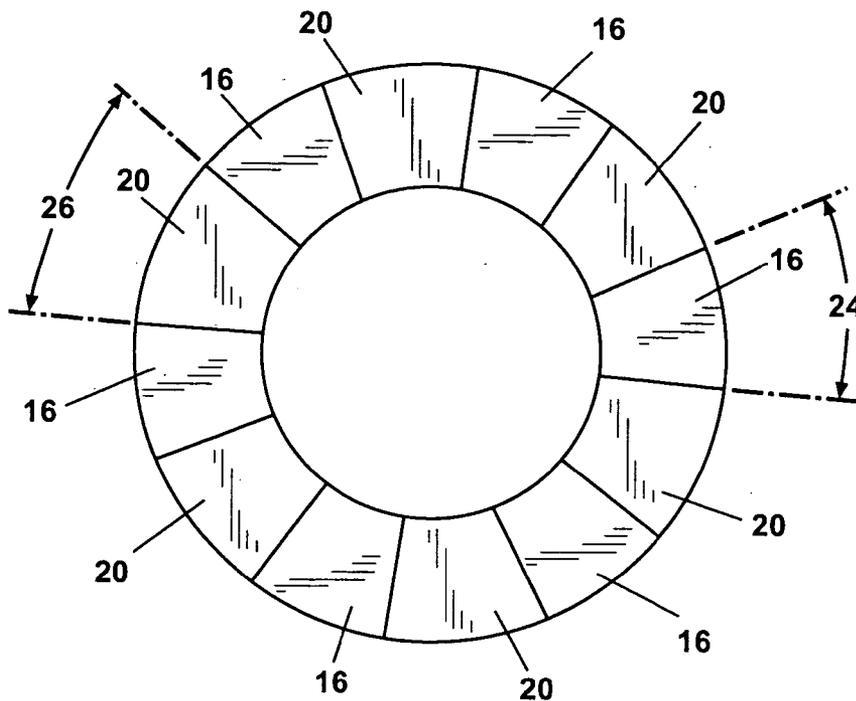


Fig. 2 (PRIOR ART)

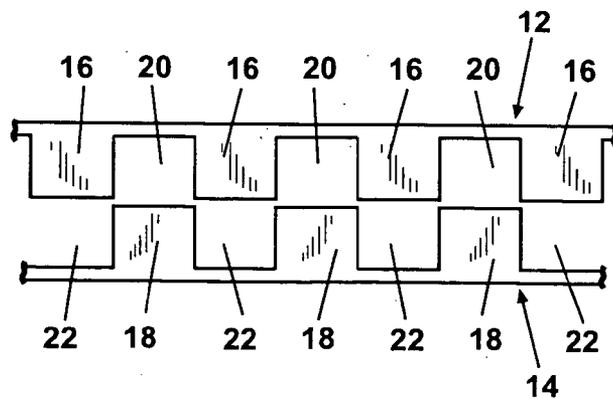


Fig. 3 (PRIOR ART)

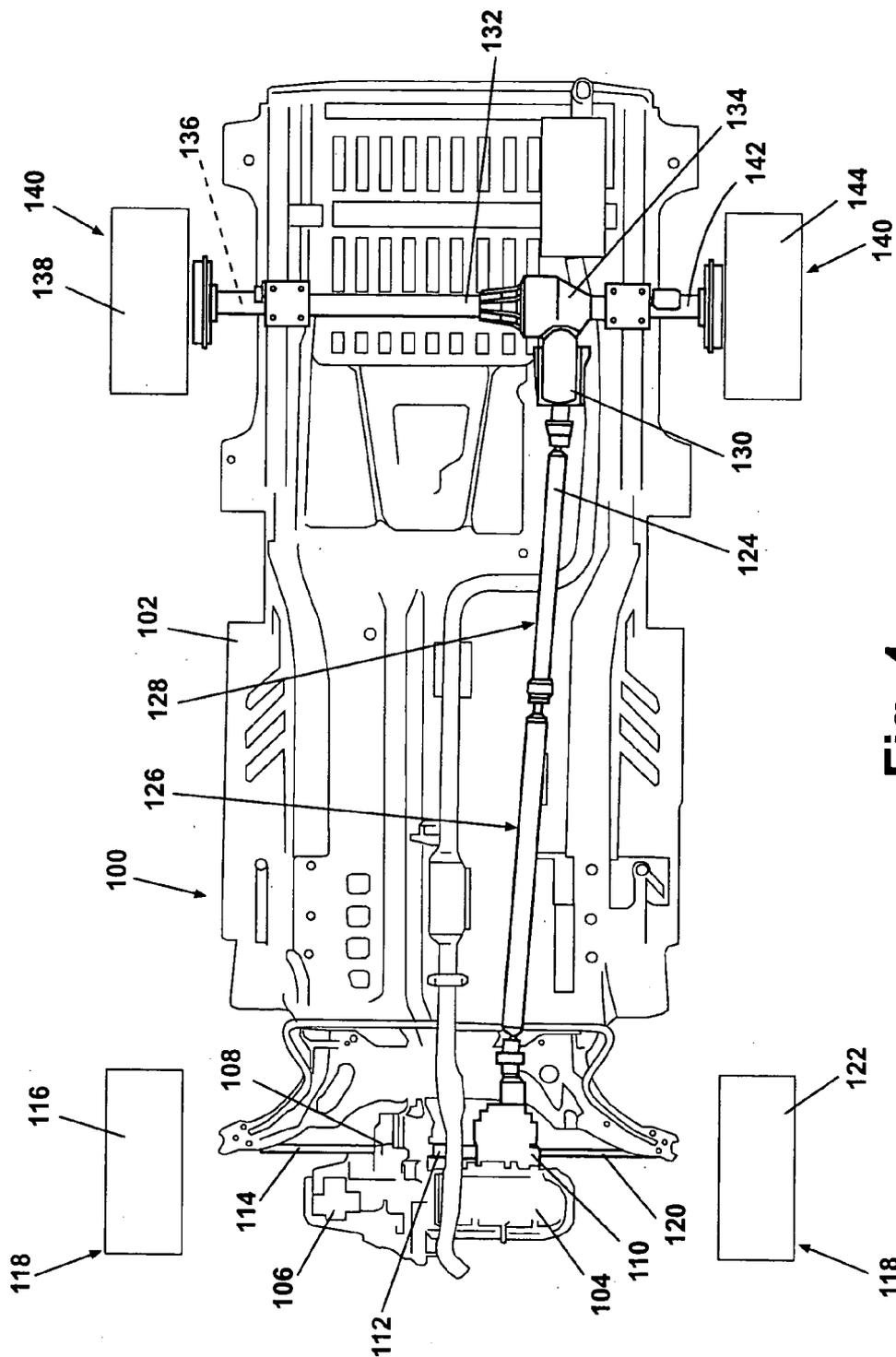


Fig. 4

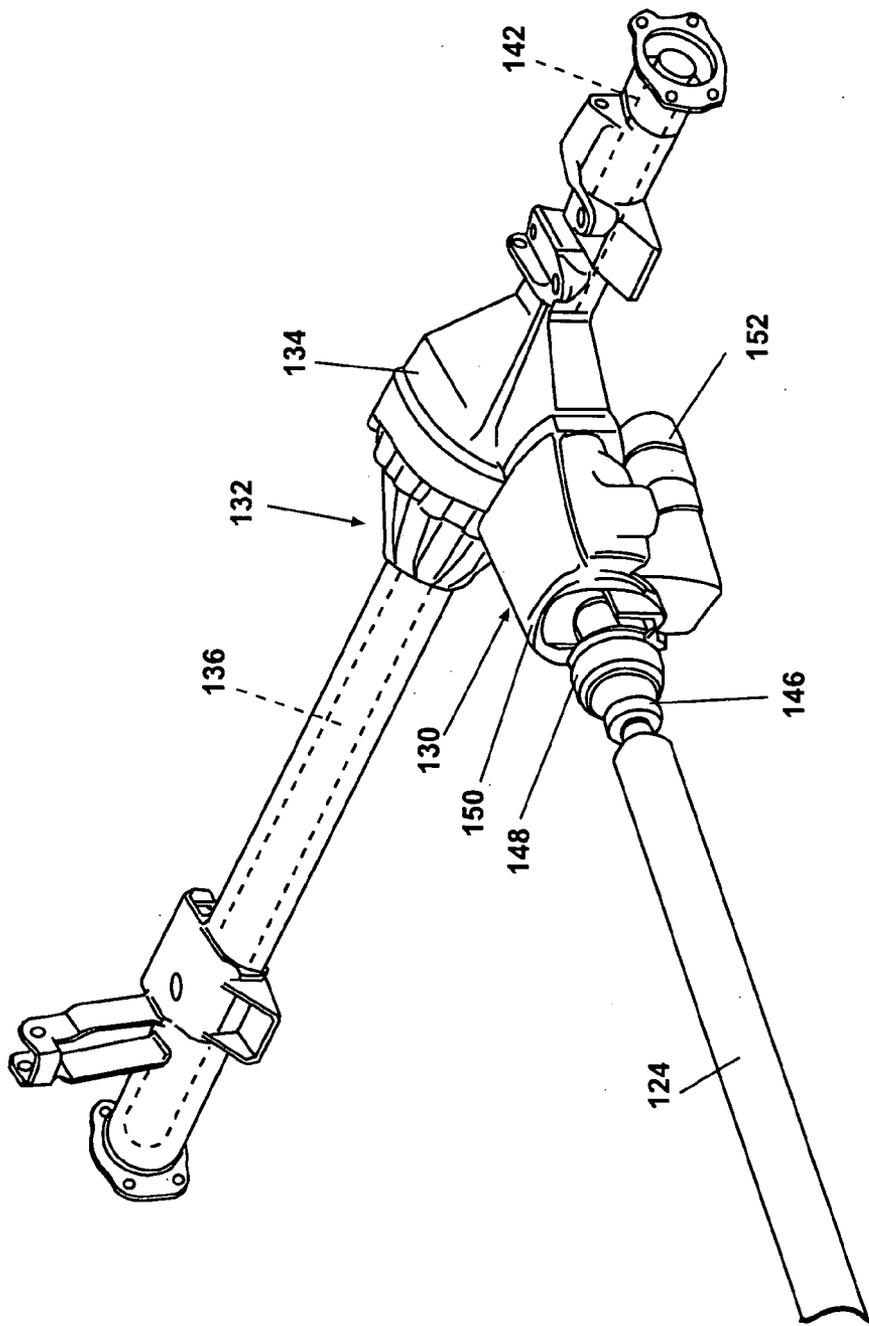


Fig. 5

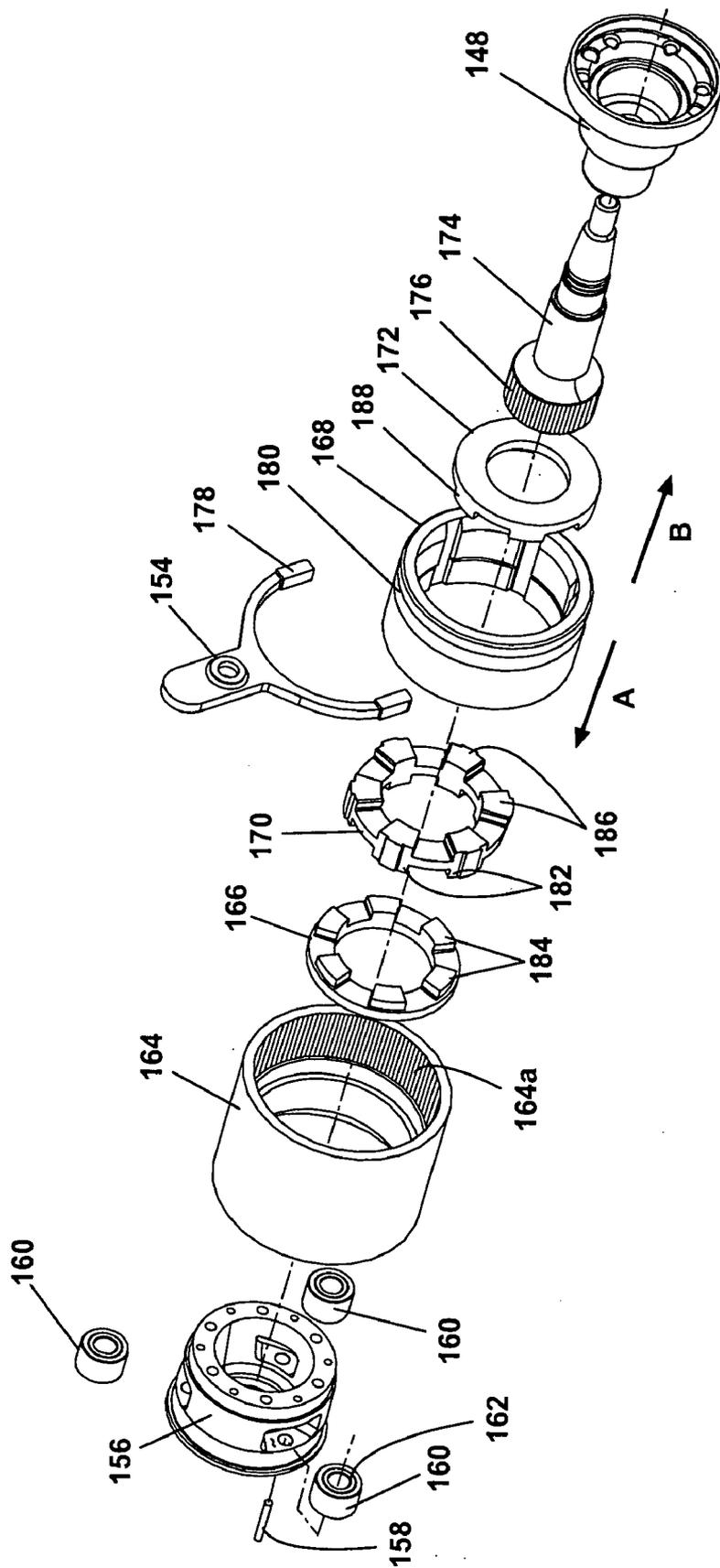


Fig. 6

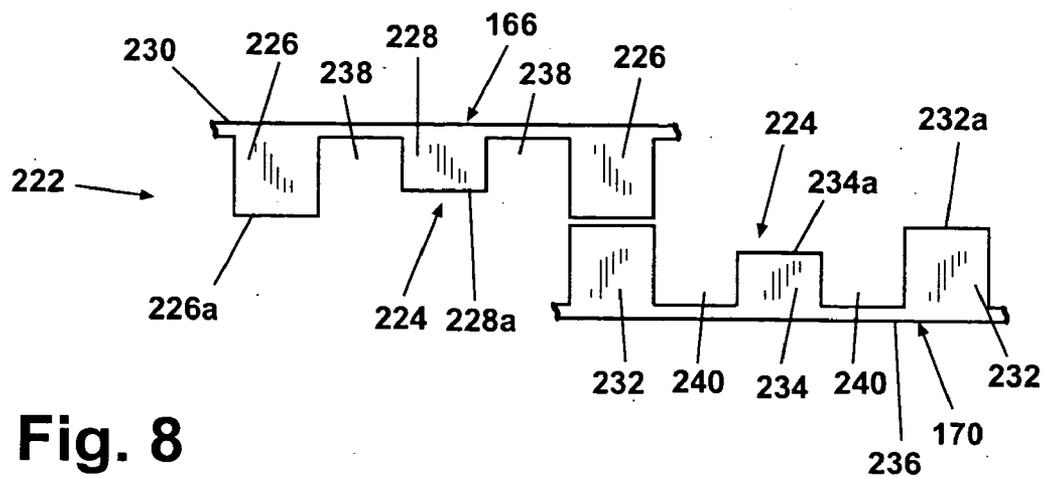


Fig. 8

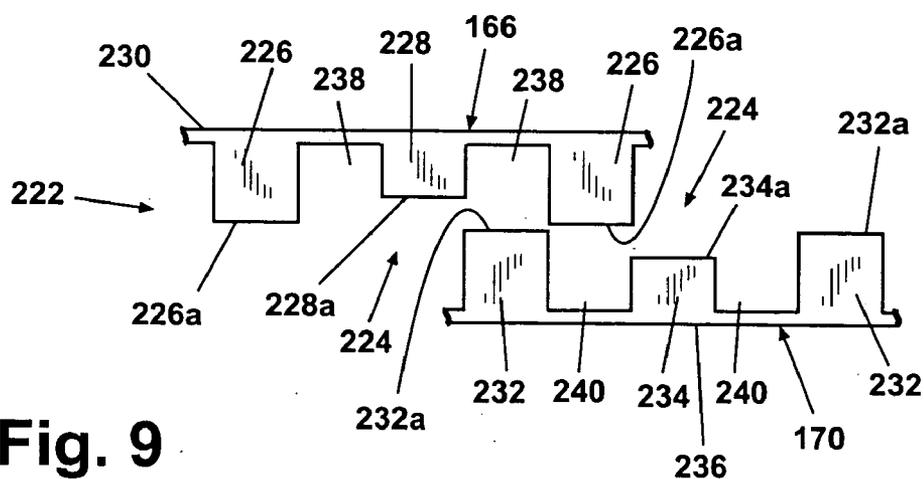


Fig. 9

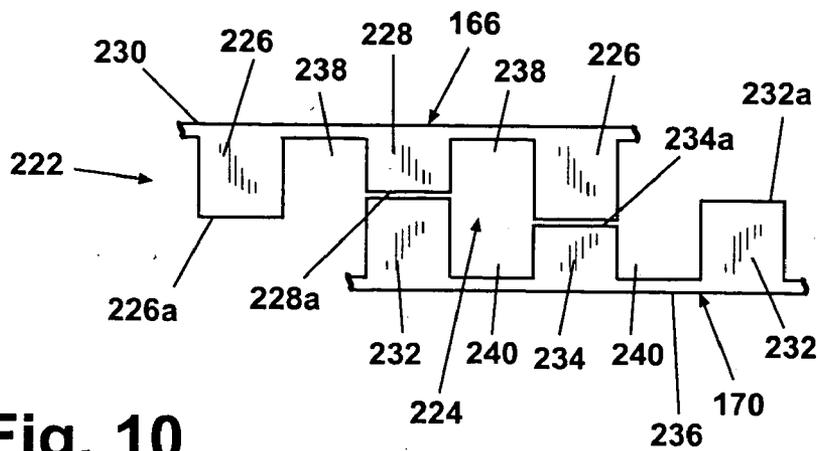


Fig. 10

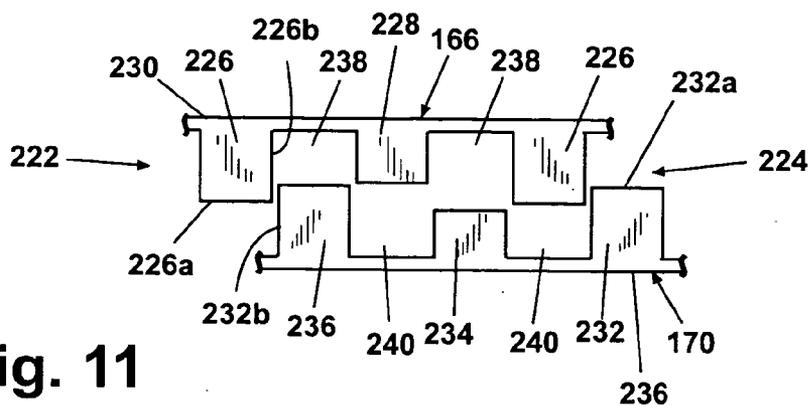


Fig. 11

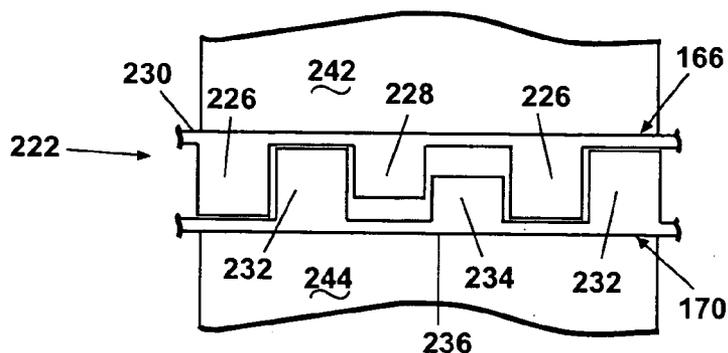


Fig. 12

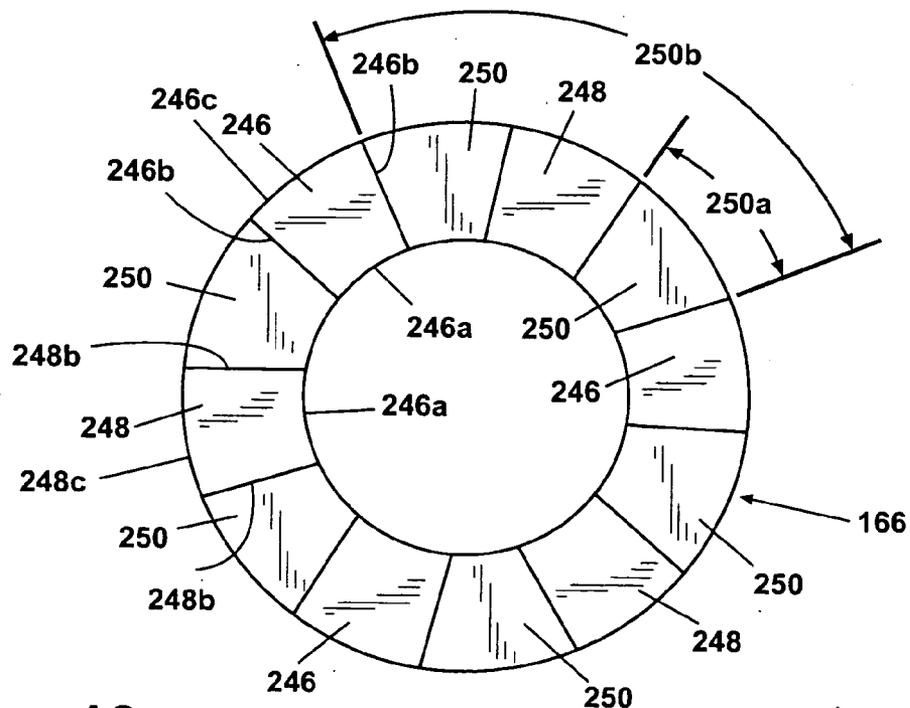


Fig. 13

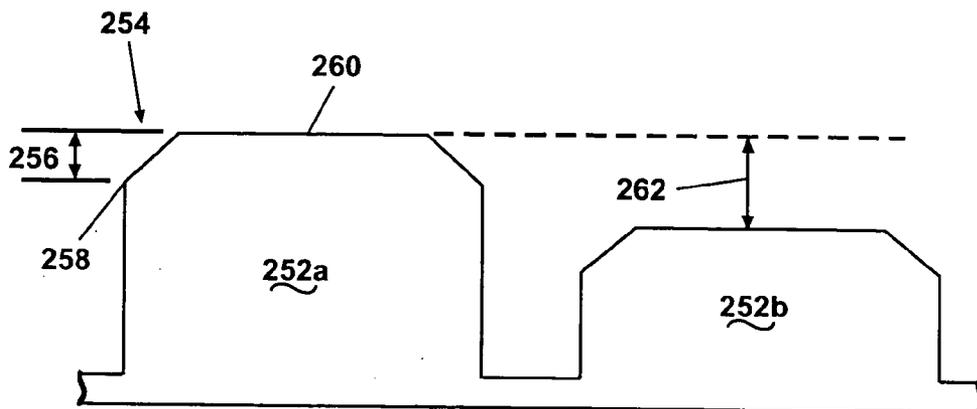


Fig. 14

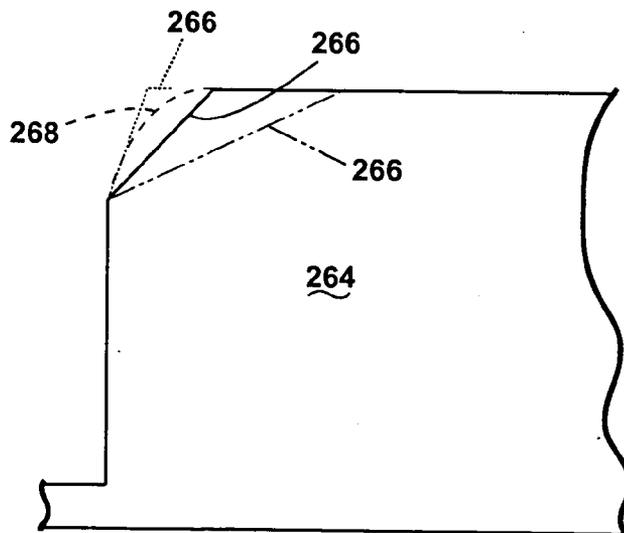


Fig. 15

POSITIVE CLUTCH WITH STAGGERED TEETH HEIGHT

FIELD

[0001] The present invention relates to a vehicle power train and more specifically to a positive clutch with staggered teeth height.

BACKGROUND

[0002] With reference to **FIGS. 1, 2** and **3**, portions of a conventional positive clutch are shown and generally indicated by reference **10**. The positive clutch **10** includes a first clutch ring **12** and a second clutch ring **14**. A first plurality of teeth **16** is located on the first clutch ring **12** and a second plurality of teeth **18** is located on the second clutch ring **14**. When the positive clutch **10** is engaged, the first plurality of teeth **16** and the second plurality of teeth **18** mesh together such that the first clutch ring **12** and the second clutch ring **14** are connected and can no longer rotate relative to one another. Unlike an exemplary friction clutch (not shown), the positive clutch **10** does not slip when engaged.

[0003] In most instances, the first clutch ring **12** is out of rotational alignment with the second clutch ring **14**, so the first clutch ring **12** or the second clutch ring **14** must rotate relative to one another to align the first plurality of teeth **16** with the second plurality of teeth **18**. More specifically, the first clutch ring **12** includes spaces **20** between the first plurality of teeth **16**. Like the first clutch ring **12**, the second clutch ring **14** also includes spaces **22** between the second plurality of teeth **18**. As shown in **FIG. 3**, alignment and engagement of the positive clutch **10** requires that the first plurality of teeth **16** moves into the spaces **22** of the second clutch ring **14**. Similarly, the second plurality of teeth **18** needs to move into the spaces **20** of the first clutch ring **12**. To facilitate alignment and engagement of the positive clutch **10**, the spaces **20, 22** are larger than the plurality of teeth **16, 18**. The larger the spaces **20, 22**, (relative to the teeth **16, 18** respectively) the easier it is to engage the clutch **10**. Relatively large spaces between the teeth of the positive clutch **10**, however, generally result in increased noise and vibration.

[0004] With reference to **FIG. 2**, it will be appreciated that the geometry of the clutch rings **12, 14** lend themselves to be discussed in radial coordinates. As such, each tooth of the plurality of teeth **16, 18** can occupy a certain amount of circumferential spacing on the clutch rings **12, 14**. More specifically, each tooth, for example, can occupy a circumferential space of about twenty-eight (28) degrees (indicated by reference numeral **24**) while the spaces **20, 22** therebetween (indicated by reference numeral **26**) can occupy a circumferential space of about thirty-two (32) degrees. With this arrangement, there are six teeth with four degrees of clearance or lash between each tooth as shown in **FIG. 2**.

[0005] As noted above, it is easier to mesh the positive clutch **10** when there is more lash present, when compared to a similar positive clutch with less lash. More lash, however, causes the positive clutch **10** to produce noise and vibration due to the abundance of spacing between the teeth causing motion and clatter therebetween. To reduce noise and vibration, lash between teeth can be reduced. The reduction of lash, however, can also create additional noise and vibration due to the inability of the positive clutch to

engage because each clutch ring **12, 14** of the positive clutch **10** will continue to rotate against one another and create noise and vibration until the positive clutch **10** engages.

SUMMARY

[0006] The present invention includes a positive clutch having a first clutch ring and a second clutch ring. The positive clutch further includes a first plurality of teeth connected to the first clutch ring. The first plurality of teeth includes a first set of teeth and a second set of teeth. The first set of teeth is taller than said second set of teeth.

[0007] Further areas of applicability of the present invention will become apparent from the detailed description provided hereinafter. It should be understood that the detailed description and specific examples, while indicating the various embodiments of the invention, are intended for purposes of illustration only and are not intended to limit the scope of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0008] The present invention will become more fully understood from the detailed description, the appended claims and the accompanying drawings, wherein:

[0009] **FIG. 1** is a perspective view of a conventional first clutch ring and a conventional second clutch ring of a conventional positive clutch;

[0010] **FIG. 2** is a front view of the first clutch ring of **FIG. 1** showing a plurality of clutch teeth and spaces therebetween;

[0011] **FIG. 3** is a side view of the first clutch ring and the second clutch ring of **FIG. 1** positioned to be meshed together;

[0012] **FIG. 4** is a partial plan view of an underside of a vehicle having a two speed all wheel drive system constructed in accordance with the teachings of the present invention;

[0013] **FIG. 5** is a perspective view of a rear axle assembly of **FIG. 4** showing a drive unit directly mounted to a rear differential constructed in accordance with the teachings of the present invention;

[0014] **FIG. 6** is an exploded assembly view of the drive unit of **FIG. 5**;

[0015] **FIG. 7** is a cross-sectional view of the drive unit of **FIG. 6** showing a high range configuration and a low range configuration;

[0016] **FIGS. 8-12** are side views of a first clutch ring and a second clutch ring of a positive clutch constructed in accordance with the teachings of the present invention further showing the progression of rotation, connection and engagement of each side of the positive clutch;

[0017] **FIG. 13** is a simplified front view of the first clutch ring constructed in accordance with the teachings of the present invention;

[0018] **FIG. 14** is a front view of a clutch tooth constructed in accordance with the teachings of the present invention showing an edge treatment; and

[0019] FIG. 15 is a front view of the clutch tooth of FIG. 14 showing various alternative edge treatments.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE VARIOUS EMBODIMENTS

[0020] The following description of the various embodiments is merely exemplary in nature and is in no way intended to limit the invention, its application, or uses.

[0021] With reference to FIG. 4, an exemplary two speed all wheel drive system 100 is shown viewed from an under surface of a vehicle 102. The vehicle 102 includes an engine 104, a transmission 106 and a drive train that can include a center differential 108 and a power take off unit (PTU) 110. A PTU input shaft 112 can connect the center differential 108 to the PTU 110. A left half shaft 114 can rotatably couple to the center differential 108, providing a drive torque to a left front wheel 116 of a front wheel set 118. A right half shaft 120 can rotatably connect through the PTU 110 to the center differential 108 and provide the drive torque to a right front wheel 122. The right front wheel 122 and the left front wheel 116 both form the front wheel set 118.

[0022] The drive torque can be distributed from the PTU 110 through a prop shaft 124 that can have a first shaft portion 126 and a second shaft portion 128, respectively, to a drive unit 130. The drive unit 130 can be directly mounted to a rear axle 132 of the vehicle 102. The rear axle 132 can include a differential 134 and a left rear axle shaft 136, which is coupled to the differential 134 and which transmits rotational torque to a left rear wheel 138 of a rear wheel set 140. The rear axle 132 also includes a right rear axle shaft 142, which can be coupled to the differential 134 and transmits drive torque to a right rear wheel 144. Both the right rear wheel 144 and the left rear wheel 138 combine to form the rear wheel set 140. A more detailed description of the vehicle 102 and the various components of the power train including further detail of the PTU 110 and the center differential is disclosed in commonly assigned. U.S. patent application titled Two-Speed All Wheel Drive System, filed Mar. 10, 2004, assigned Ser. No. 10/797,717, which is hereby incorporated by reference as if fully set forth herein.

[0023] With reference to FIG. 5, a first connector half 146, which is coupled to the prop shaft 124, can be coupled to a second connector half 148 that is associated with the drive unit 130 to facilitate the transmission of the drive torque from the prop shaft 124 to the drive unit 130. The drive unit 130 can include a housing 150 that can be connected to the housing of the rear axle 132 (as best seen in reference to FIG. 7). A shift unit 152 can be coupled to the housing 150. The drive torque can be transmitted via the drive unit 130 through the rear axle 132 to the rear wheel set 140 (shown in FIG. 4). The shift unit 152 can include an electrical actuator that can be operated, for example, from an electric power source commonly provided by the vehicle 102. An exemplary shift unit is commercially available from the Joseph Pollak Corporation of Boston, Mass. The shift unit 152 can include a linear actuator (not shown) which translates a shift fork 154 (described in further detail in reference to FIG. 6). Shifting of the shift unit 152 is not limited to a linear actuator and can also be accomplished using a solenoid operator, a vacuum diaphragm, a hydraulic operator, a cable or similar suitable device.

[0024] With reference to FIG. 6, the drive unit 130 can include a planet carrier 156. The planet carrier 156 includes

a plurality of pins 158, each supporting one of a plurality of planet gears 160 on a bearing 162. The planet carrier 156 can rotate within a ring gear 164. A first clutch ring 166 can be coupled for rotation with the planet carrier 156. The first clutch ring 166 can be connected by a plurality of fasteners (not shown) or otherwise suitably connected to the planet carrier 156.

[0025] A shift collar 168 can meshingly engage the ring gear 164 and can translate in either a shift direction "A" or a shift direction "B" within the ring gear 164. A second clutch ring 170 can be fixedly connected to an interior surface of the shift collar 168, for example by welding or other suitable fastening techniques. A third clutch ring 172 can be fixedly coupled for rotation with the second connector half 148. A sun gear shaft 174 can be coupled for rotation with the second connector half 148 and can be disposed through each of the third clutch ring 172, the shift collar 168, the second clutch ring 170, the first clutch ring 166, the ring gear 164, and the planet carrier 156, where a sun gear 176 of the sun gear shaft 174 meshingly engages the plurality of the planet gears 160. The shift fork 154 can have a pair of tines 178 that can be disposed in an annular channel 180 of the shift collar 168 such that displacement of the shift fork 154 by the shift unit 152 causes the shift collar 168 to translate in either of shift direction "A" or shift direction "B", as shown in FIG. 6.

[0026] The shift fork 154 can be displaced in shift direction "A" to translate the shift collar 168 and the second clutch ring 170 into a position wherein a plurality of clutch teeth 182 of the second clutch ring 170 engage a plurality of clutch teeth 184 of the first clutch ring 166. Displacement in shift direction "A" locks the ring gear 164 to the planet carrier 156 to facilitate torque transmission between the second connector half 148 and the planet carrier 156 in a high range or relatively high speed ratio. Displacement in shift direction "A", therefore, results in rotation of each of the planet carrier 156, the ring gear 164 and the sun gear shaft 174, without relative motion between one another.

[0027] The shift fork 154 can also be displaced in shift direction "B" to translate the shift collar 168 and the second clutch ring 170 into a position where a plurality of clutch teeth 186 on an opposite side of the second clutch ring 170 engage a plurality of clutch teeth 188 on the third clutch ring 172. In this position, the ring gear 164 is locked in a stationary condition that permits the planet gears 160 to perform a speed reduction and torque multiplication operation so that the drive torque is transmitted between the second connector half 148 and the planet carrier 156 in a low range, or relatively low speed ratio. It will be appreciated that in various alternative embodiments, the first clutch ring 166 can connect with the third clutch ring 172 thus omitting the second clutch ring 170. It will be further appreciated that the first clutch ring 166 and the third clutch ring 172 or combinations thereof can be applied in myriad applications that necessitate connection and disconnection of two members, an example of which is illustrated in FIG. 12.

[0028] In reference to FIG. 7, the rear axle 132 (FIG. 5) can include an input pinion 190, which can have a splined input shaft 192, that transmits the drive torque to the differential 134 (FIG. 5) in a manner that is well known in the art. Briefly, the input pinion 190 can transmit the drive torque to a ring gear (not shown) of the differential 134,

which causes the differential 134 to rotate within the housing of the rear axle 132. A gear set (not shown), which can include a pair of side gears (not shown) and a plurality of pinions (not shown), can be employed to transmit the drive torque to the left and right axle shafts 136 and 142 (FIG. 5). A fastener 194, such as a nut or a bolt, can be employed to fixedly, but removably couple the planet carrier 156 (FIG. 6) to the input shaft 192. The input shaft 192 can meshingly engage a mating internally splined portion 196 of the planet carrier 156. The housing 150 can include a housing flange 198. An axle 200 can be rotatably connected within a differential housing 202 that can include a differential flange 204. The housing flange 198 and the differential flange 204 are fixedly, but removably coupled together using a plurality of fasteners 206. The housing 150 can also include a pilot feature 208 that slidably engages a mating feature 210 of the differential flange 204, so as to permit various components of the drive unit 130 and the rear axle 132 to be aligned about a common centerline indicated by the letter

[0029] The sun gear shaft 174 can be rotatably supported within the housing 150 along common centerline "C" by a bearing set 212. A shaft seal 214 can be employed to seal a junction between the sun gear shaft 174 and the housing 150. The sun gear 176 on the sun gear shaft 174 meshingly engages the plurality of the planet gears 160. The planet gears 160, in turn, rotatably engage an internally toothed surface 164a (FIG. 6) of the ring gear 164. The ring gear 164 is rotatably supported on an outer diameter of the planet carrier 156 by a first bearing 216 and a second bearing 218. A plurality of fasteners 220 can be employed to couple the third clutch ring 172 to a portion of the housing 150.

[0030] FIG. 7 shows a configuration for the drive unit 130 during the high range or high speed mode condition of operation in a portion of the drive unit 130 below common centerline "C". The low range or low speed mode of operation configuration is shown above common centerline "C". In the high range operating condition, the shift collar 168 is shifted such that the second clutch ring 170 and the first clutch ring 166 engage together. In this condition, the plurality of the clutch teeth 182 on the second clutch ring 170 engages with the plurality of the clutch teeth 184 on the first clutch ring 166 such that the drive torque received via the sun gear shaft 174 is transferred via the planet gears 160 to the ring gear 164 and from the shift collar 168 to the planet carrier 156. The planet carrier 156 thereby transmits drive torque in the high range via the input pinion 190 to the differential 134.

[0031] In the low range or the low speed mode of operation shown above common centerline "C" in FIG. 7, the shift collar 168 is displaced to the left as shown in FIG. 7, which causes the clutch teeth 186 of the second clutch ring 170 to engage the respective clutch teeth 188 of the third clutch ring 172. Because the third clutch ring 172 is fixedly engaged to the housing 150, the ring gear 164 is thereby grounded via the shift collar 168 to the housing 150 and cannot rotate. The drive torque from the sun gear shaft 174 is therefore transferred in the low range via the sun gear 176 to the planet gears 160 and directly to the planet carrier 156 such that the planet carrier 156 is driven at a predetermined speed ratio relative to the sun gear 176, such as, but not limited to, a 1:3 ratio.

[0032] With reference to FIGS. 8 - 12, portions of the first clutch ring 166 and the second clutch ring 170 are shown

such that the progressive meshing of the two clutch rings 166, 170 can be seen. It will be appreciated that in FIGS. 8-12, only portions of the first clutch ring 166 and the second clutch ring 170 are illustrated, such that only three teeth are shown for the first clutch ring 166 and the second clutch ring 170 respectively. It will be further appreciated that one or both of the first clutch ring 166 and the second clutch ring 170 may be biased toward the opposed clutch ring by either an electric actuator, a spring or other suitable device. As can be seen in FIG. 8, the first clutch ring 166 is out of alignment with the second clutch ring 170 such that engagement of a positive clutch 222 cannot occur unless the first clutch ring 166 or the second clutch ring 170 is rotated relative to the opposed clutch ring. As shown in FIG. 9, the first clutch ring 166 or the second clutch ring 170 continues to rotate relative to another. It will be additionally appreciated that the clutch will continue to rotate, until the first clutch ring 166 meshes with the second clutch ring 170, as shown in FIG. 12. Moreover, the first clutch ring 166 and the second clutch ring 170 can rotate relative to one another to engage the positive clutch 222 in either a clockwise or a counter-clockwise direction.

[0033] To facilitate meshing of the positive clutch 222, the first clutch ring 166 and the second clutch ring 170 have staggered tooth height configurations generally indicated by reference numeral 224. The first clutch ring 166 can include a plurality of first teeth 226 and a plurality of second teeth 228 connected to a first backing 230. Each second tooth 228 is shorter than the first teeth 226 between which it sits. The second clutch ring 170 can have a plurality of third teeth 232 and a plurality of fourth teeth 234 connected to a second backing 236. Similar to the first clutch ring 166, each fourth tooth 234 is shorter than the third teeth 232 between which it sits.

[0034] First clutch ring spaces 238 formed on the first backing 230 are disposed between the teeth 226, 228 of the first clutch ring 166. Similarly, second clutch ring spaces 240 formed on the second backing 236 are disposed between the teeth 232, 234 of the second clutch ring 170. It will be appreciated that with the first clutch ring 166 and the second clutch ring 170, as illustrated in FIGS. 8-12, the teeth 226, 228, 232 and 234 are shown as only exemplary portions of the otherwise complete clutch rings 166, 170, as illustrated in FIGS. 6 and 13.

[0035] With continuing reference to FIGS. 8-12, the first clutch ring 166 can be moved relative to the second clutch ring 170 to engage the two rings 166, 170. In FIG. 8, an end face 226a of one of the first teeth 226 makes contact with an end face 232a of one of the third teeth 232. In this position, the positive clutch 222 is unable to engage. The first clutch ring 166 and the second clutch ring 170, therefore, must continue to rotate relative to one another. In FIG. 9, one of the third teeth 232 has continued to rotate beyond one of the first teeth 226. The positive clutch 222 may attempt to engage in this position, but in most instances, the rotational forces on the first clutch ring 166 or the second clutch ring 170 will prevent engagement so that the clutch rings 166, 170 will continue to rotate.

[0036] With reference to FIG. 10, the first clutch ring 166 continues to move relative to the second clutch ring 170. The end face 232a of one of the third teeth 232 comes into contact with an end face 228a of one of the second teeth 228.

Moreover, an end face **234a** of one of the fourth teeth **234** comes into contact with the end face **226a** of one of the first teeth **226**. It will be appreciated that in this instance, the positive clutch **222** is still unable to engage and the first clutch ring **166** continues to rotate relative to the second clutch ring **170**.

[0037] With reference to **FIG. 11**, one of the third teeth **232** has advanced past one of the second teeth **228** such that a side **232b** of one of the third teeth **232** makes contact with a side **226b** of one of the first teeth **226**. It will be appreciated that in this instance the first clutch ring **166** is no longer able to move relative to the second clutch ring **170** because of the interference between one of the first teeth **226** and one of the third teeth **232**. Moreover, one or both clutch rings **166**, **170** are biased toward the opposed clutch ring, which further helps to bring the two rings **166**, **170** into an engaged condition as shown in **FIG. 12**.

[0038] In **FIG. 12**, the positive clutch **222** is engaged. For example, a first member **242** is connected to the first clutch ring **166** and a second member **244** is connected to the second clutch ring **170**. A rotational force transmitted through the first member **242** will be transmitted to the second member **244** through the positive clutch **222**.

[0039] With reference to **FIG. 13**, the first clutch ring **166** may be similarly configured as the portion of the first clutch ring **166** as shown in **FIG. 8**, such that the teeth of the first clutch ring **166** have a staggered height configuration **224**. As such, taller teeth are indicated by reference numeral **246** while shorter teeth are indicated by reference numeral **248** with spaces there between indicated by reference numeral **250**. It will be appreciated that the circular nature of the first clutch ring **166** lends itself to be described in radial coordinates. To that end, the teeth **246**, **248** can encompass a circumferential spacing of about twenty-eight (28) degrees of the total clutch ring circle respectively, while the spaces therebetween **250** can occupy a circumferential spacing of approximately thirty-two (32) degrees of the clutch ring circle indicated by reference numeral **250a**. Furthermore, both the taller teeth **246** and the shorter teeth **248** have an arc shape. More specifically, the taller teeth **246** have two curved sides **246a** and two straight sides **246b** meeting at a top **246c**. Similarly, the shorter teeth **248** have two curved sides **248a** and two straight sides **248b** meeting at a top **248c**.

[0040] If the first clutch ring **166** was configured similar to the conventional clutch ring as shown in **FIG. 2**, the spaces **250** would provide an engagement slot into which a tooth of an opposing clutch ring would fit. In the conventional clutch example of **FIG. 2**, the engagement slot would be approximately thirty-two (32) degrees. In the present invention, however, the engagement slot is effectively enlarged, such that the engagement slot is enlarged to ninety-two (92) degrees as indicated by reference numeral **250b** in the example provided.

[0041] The enlarged engagement slot **250b** is operable because the taller teeth **246** of each opposed clutch ring make contact (for example, the taller teeth **226**, **232** of the first clutch ring **166** and the second clutch ring **170** respectively) and continue to rotate past one another. In addition, the first clutch ring **166** or the second clutch ring **170** advances closer to the opposed clutch ring thus closing the distance between the first clutch ring **166** and the second clutch ring **170**. At this point, the taller teeth **246** can either

mesh in the space immediately adjacent to the tooth or continue to rotate and thus make contact with the next shorter tooth **248** (for example one of the teeth **228** of the first clutch ring **166** in **FIG. 8**).

[0042] Once the taller tooth **246** advances beyond the shorter tooth **248** of an opposed clutch ring, the taller tooth **246** will encounter the side of the next taller tooth **246** of the opposed clutch ring. Because the first clutch ring **166** and the second clutch ring **170** are biased toward one another interference between the teeth forces the positive clutch **222** to engage. The positive clutch **222** engages because the taller tooth **246** can no longer rotate beyond the opposed taller tooth into which it has come in contact. Therefore, the opposed clutch ring accelerates to the rotational speed of the first clutch ring and thus the positive clutch meshes as shown in **FIG. 12**. In contrast, in the conventional positive clutch **10** (**FIG. 1**) the tooth must enter the engagement slot **26** (**FIG. 2**) or miss the engagement slot **26** and wait until the next engagement slot **26** rotates underneath.

[0043] As explained earlier, the engagement slot is larger than the tooth to promote engagement of the tooth into the engagement slot. For example, the engagement slot **26** (**FIG. 2**) can occupy thirty-two (32) degrees of the circular clutch ring while a tooth can occupy twenty-eight (28) degrees. With that example, there are four (4) degrees of total gap between a tooth and the engagement slot. This four (4) degree wide gap is referred to as lash or clearance. In the present invention, the lash and the clearance can be reduced because the teeth of the clutch ring need not enter the engagement slot in the manner required in the conventional positive clutch **10**. Reduction of clearance or lash improves noise and vibration generation due to the gap between the tooth and the bigger engagement slot. Moreover, noise and vibration are further reduced because the first clutch ring need only rotate beyond a first tall tooth and shorter tooth set before engagement thereof. In contrast, the conventional positive clutch **10** must continue to rotate until the tooth enters the engagement slot and meshes.

[0044] With reference to **FIG. 14**, an exemplary tooth from either the first clutch ring **166** or the second clutch ring **170** is shown and indicated by reference numeral **252a**. The tooth **252a** has edge treatments indicated by reference numeral **254**. The edge treatments **254** can include chamfering or rounding to a predetermined radius. Whether the edge treatments **254** include chamfering, radiusing, beveling or other suitable edge treatments, the edge treatments **254** include an edge treatment height indicated by reference numeral **256**. It will be appreciated that the edge treatment height is defined by the distance from the beginning of the edge treatment **254** indicated by reference numeral **258** to a top **260** of the tooth **252**. With that in mind, a height difference **262** between the taller tooth **252a** (for example one of the first teeth **226** in **FIG. 8**) and a shorter tooth **252b** (for example, one of the teeth **228** in **FIG. 8**) is greater than about 2 times the edge treatment height **256**. (i.e., the height difference **262** > about 2.(the edge treatment height **256**)). In **FIG. 15**, the edge treatments **254** are shown on an exemplary clutch tooth **264** in various configurations. To that end, the edge treatments **254** can include chamfering at various angles **266**, rounded edges **268**, and beveling in various configurations.

[0045] The description of the invention is merely exemplary in nature and, thus, variations that do not depart from

the gist of the invention are intended to be within the scope of the invention. Such variations are not to be regarded as a departure from the spirit and scope of the invention.

What is claimed is:

1. A positive clutch having a first clutch ring and a second clutch ring, the positive clutch comprising:

a first plurality of teeth connected to the first clutch ring, said first plurality of teeth includes a first set of teeth and a second set of teeth, wherein said first set of teeth are taller than said second set of teeth.

2. The positive clutch of claim 1 further comprising a second plurality of teeth connected to the second clutch ring configured to connect with the first clutch ring, said second plurality of teeth includes a third set of teeth and a fourth set of teeth, wherein said third set of teeth are taller than said fourth set of teeth.

3. The positive clutch of claim 1 wherein a tooth of said second set of teeth is disposed between two teeth of said first set of teeth.

4. The positive clutch of claim 1 wherein a tooth of said first set of teeth includes an edge having an edge treatment including a pre-determined edge treatment height.

5. The positive clutch of claim 4 wherein said edge treatment is a bevel.

6. The positive clutch of claim 4 wherein said edge treatment is a radius.

7. The positive clutch of claim 4 wherein said first set of teeth are taller than said second set of teeth by an amount that is at least twice said edge treatment height.

8. The positive clutch of claim 1 wherein a top of said first set of teeth is parallel with a top of said second set of teeth.

9. The positive clutch of claim 1 wherein the first clutch ring engages the second clutch ring by relative motion therebetween in one of a clockwise direction and a counter-clockwise direction.

10. A positive clutch comprising:

a first clutch ring having at least two tall first teeth and at least two short first teeth, wherein each short first tooth is disposed between a pair of said tall first teeth; and

a second clutch ring having at least said two tall second teeth and said at least two short second teeth, wherein each short second tooth is disposed between a pair of the second tall teeth.

11. The positive clutch ring of claim 10 wherein each of the first tall, first short, second tall and second short teeth includes an edge having an edge treatment of a pre-determined edge treatment height.

12. The positive clutch of claim 11 wherein said edge treatment is a bevel.

13. The positive clutch of claim 11 wherein said edge treatment is a radius.

14. The positive clutch of claim 11 wherein said at least two tall first teeth are taller than said at least two short first teeth by an amount that is at least twice said edge treatment height.

15. The positive clutch of claim 11 wherein said at least two tall second teeth are taller than said at least two short second teeth by an amount that is at least twice said edge treatment height.

16. The positive clutch of claim 10 wherein a top of said at least two tall first teeth is parallel to a top of said at least two short first teeth.

17. The positive clutch of claim 10 wherein a top of said at least two tall second teeth is parallel to a top of said at least two short second teeth.

18. The positive clutch of claim 10 wherein the first clutch ring engages the second clutch ring by relative motion therebetween in one of a clockwise direction and a counter-clockwise direction.

19. A method of engaging a positive clutch comprising:

providing a first clutch ring having at least two tall first teeth and at least two short first teeth;

providing a second clutch ring having at least two tall second teeth and at least two short second teeth;

moving said first clutch ring and said second clutch ring together; and

rotating one of said first clutch ring said second clutch ring, and combinations thereof until a side of a tooth of said at least two tall first teeth contacts a side of a tooth of said at least two tall second teeth.

20. The method of claim 19 further comprising rotating one of the first clutch ring and the second clutch ring, wherein the relative motion therebetween is one of a clockwise direction and a counter-clockwise direction.

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