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(54) **LUNCH BOX**

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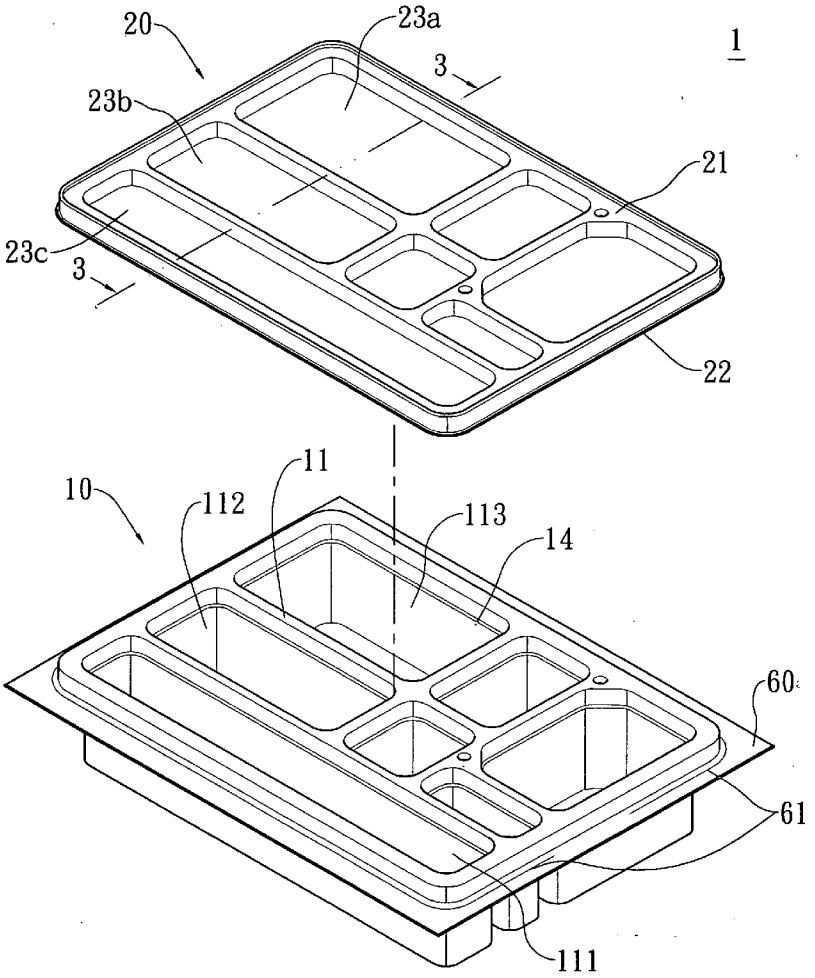
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A lunch box comprising: a receptacle and a cover able to cover the receptacle. The receptacle is provided therein with partitions to divide the receptacle into a plurality of receiving spaces; in which a receiving space is used to store therein soup, and the remaining spaces are used to store therein cooked rice or repast. And in which the cover is formed thereon downwardly recessed areas in corresponding to and in opposition respectively to the receiving spaces of the receptacle; the bottoms or peripheries of the receiving spaces of the cover and the partitions of the receiving spaces of the receptacle at the positions opposite respectively to those of the bottoms or peripheries are provided with engaging means for mutual engaging, so that the cover and the receptacle can be tightly engaging with each other to prevent spilling of soup or food juices.



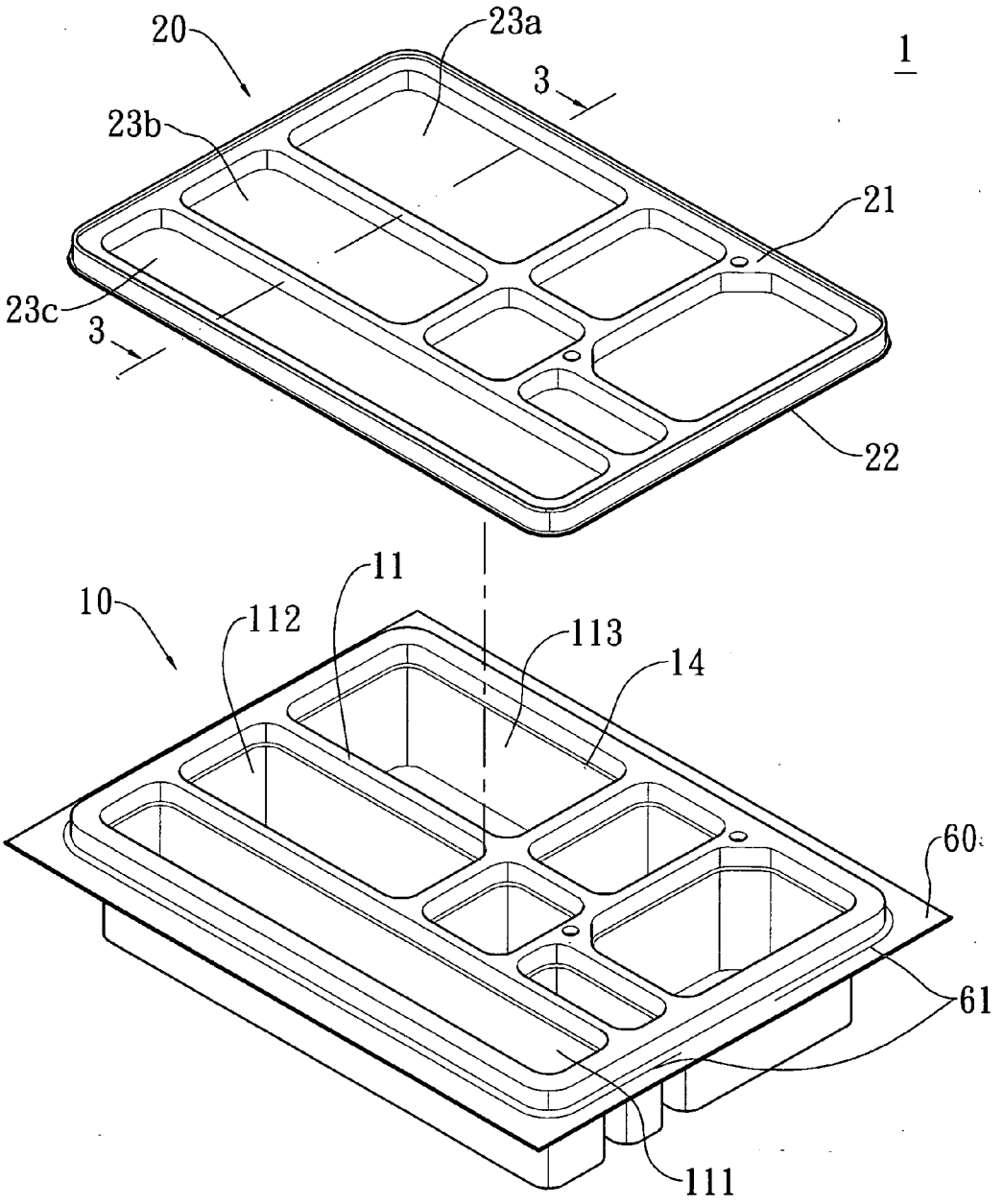


Fig. 1

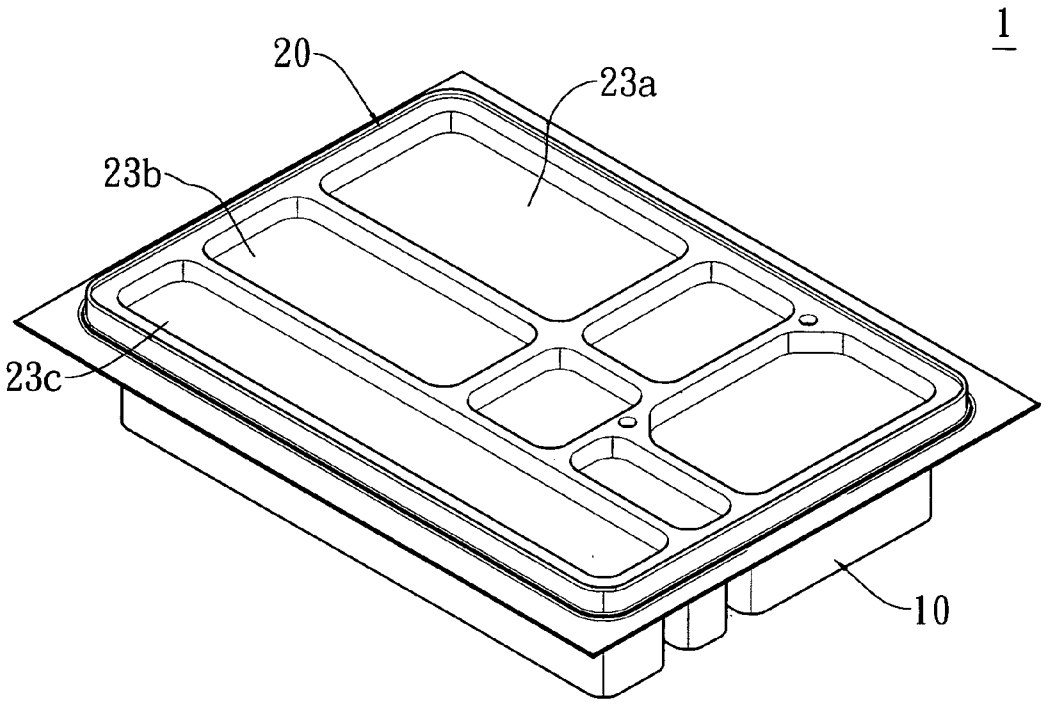


Fig. 2

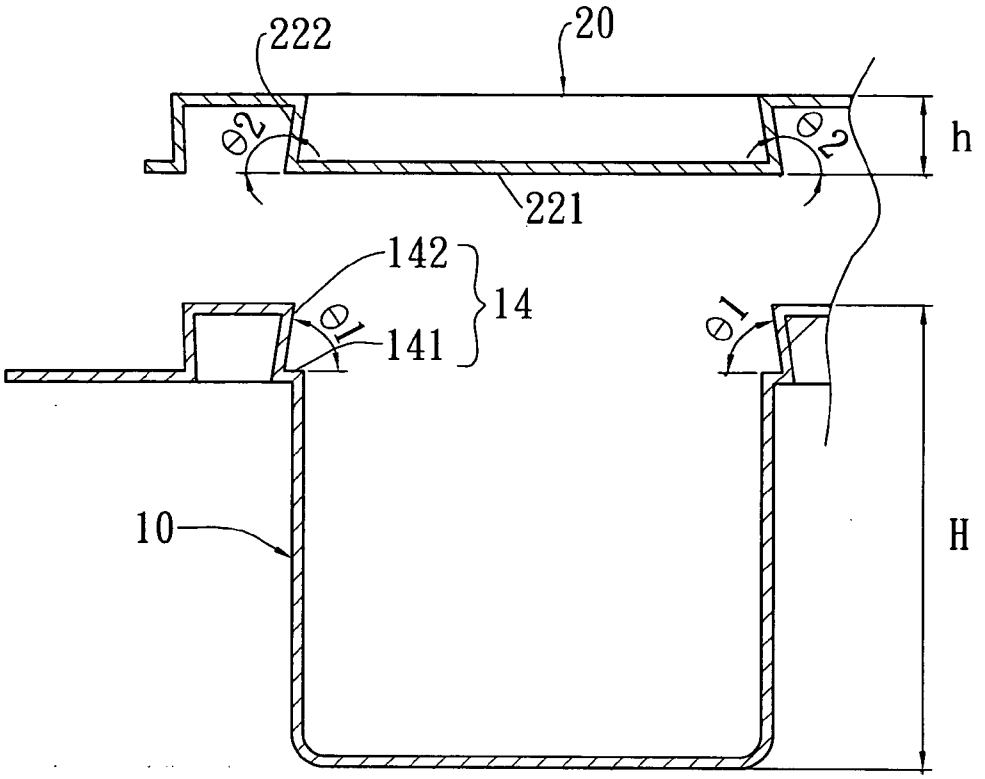


Fig. 3A

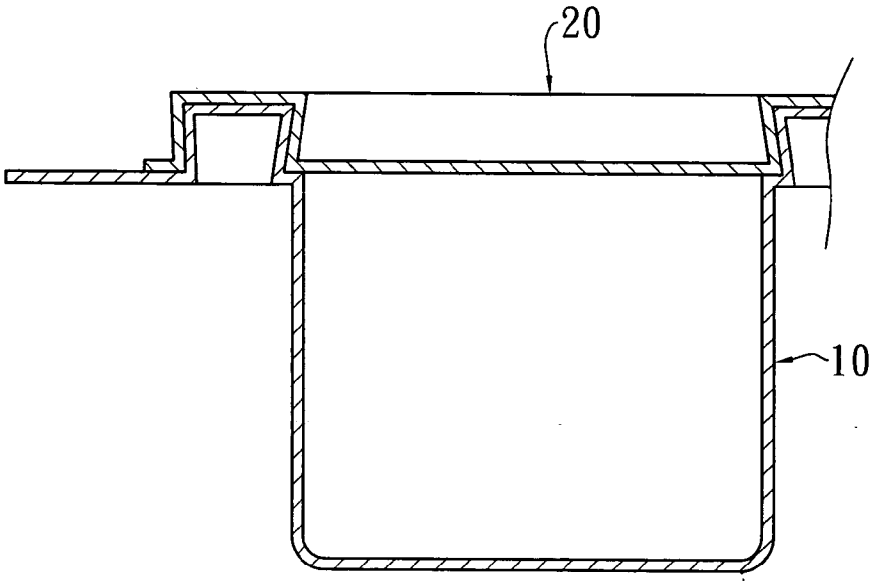


Fig. 3B

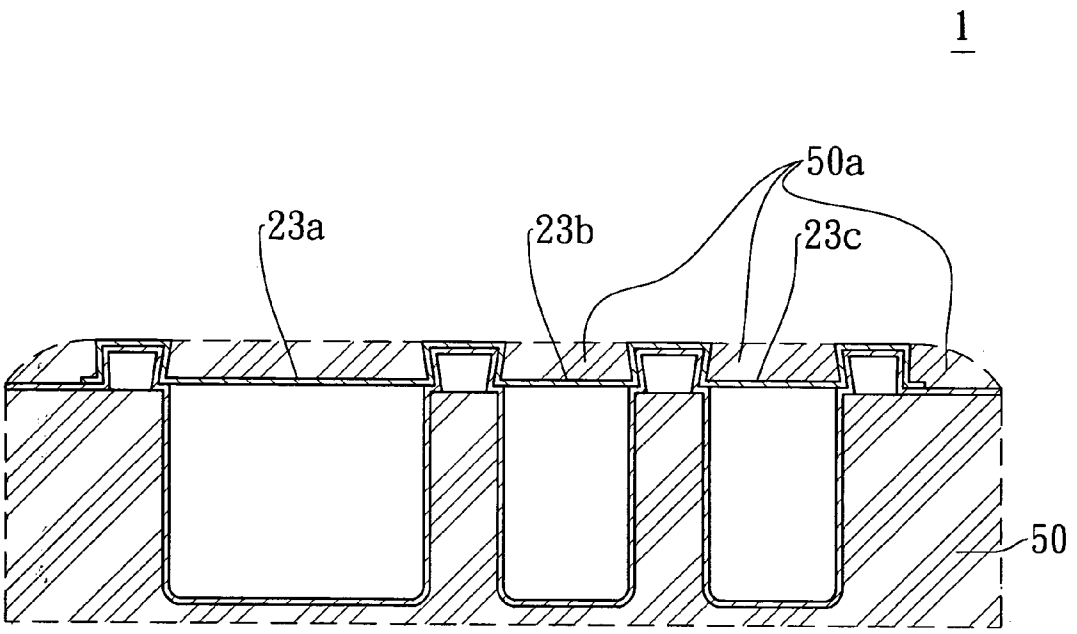


Fig. 4

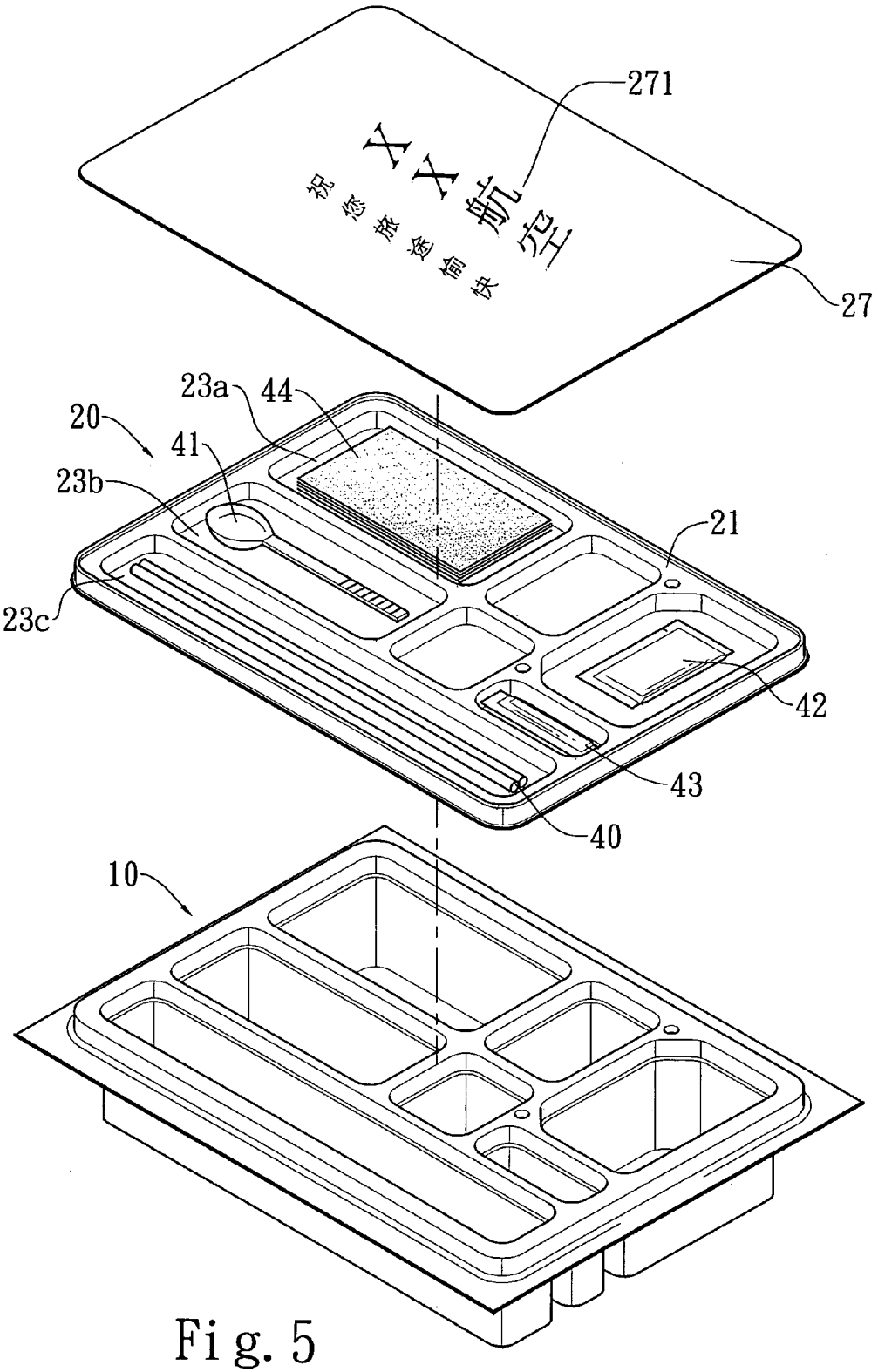


Fig. 5

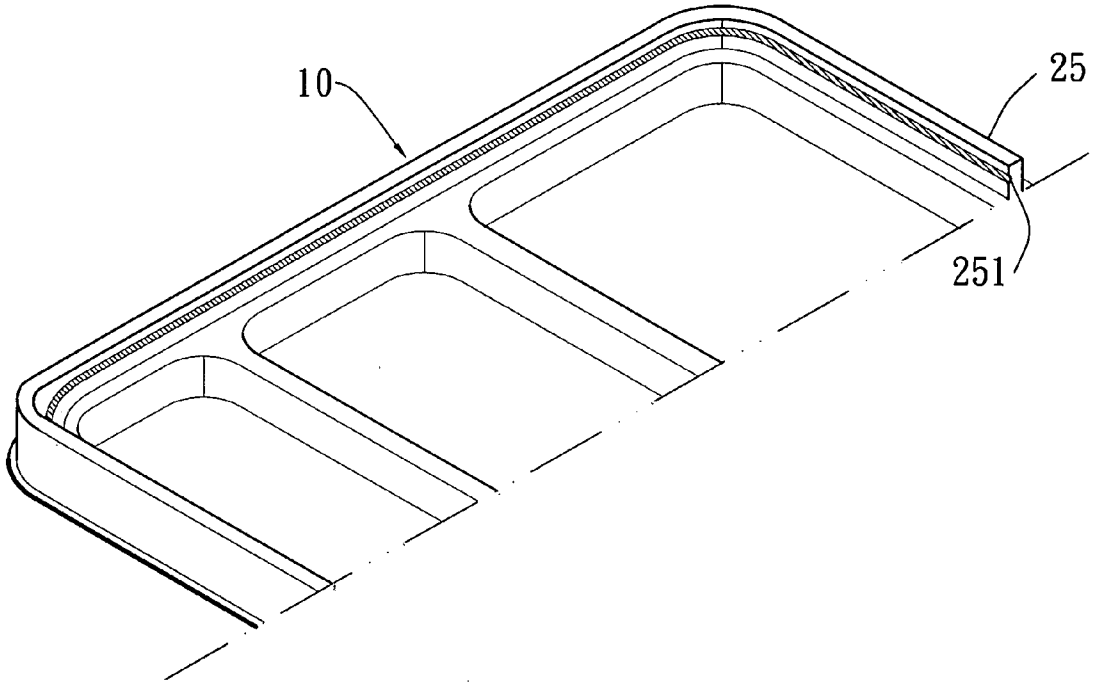


Fig. 6

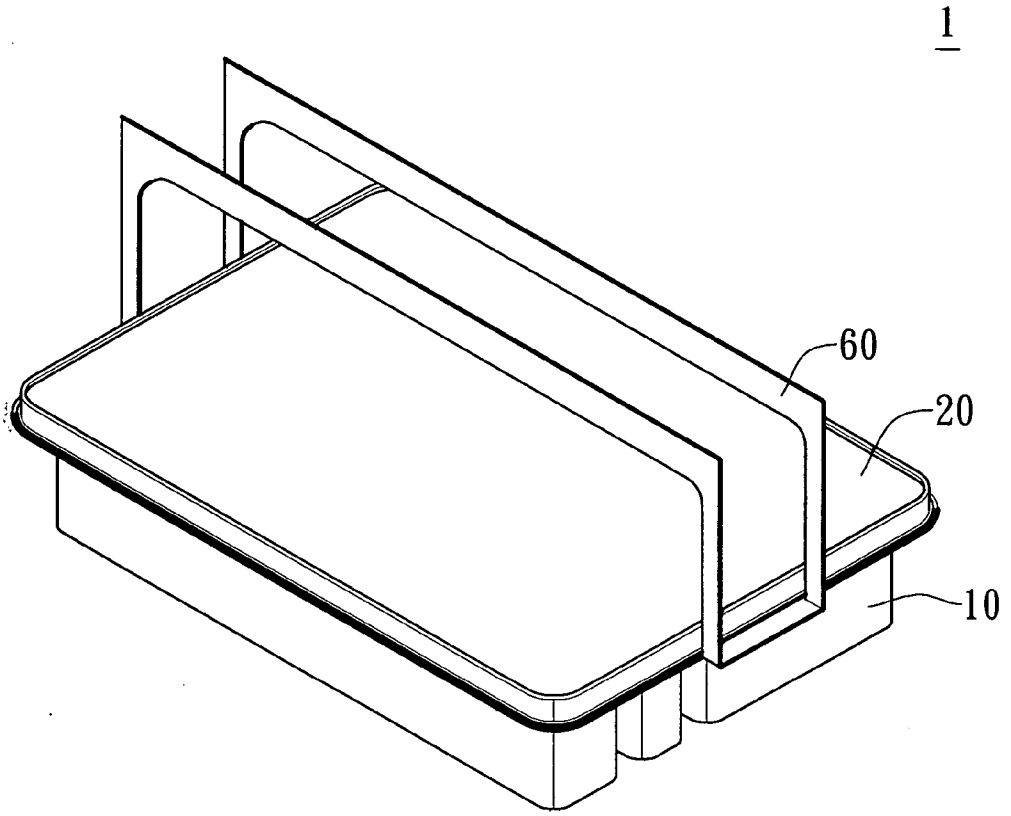


Fig. 7

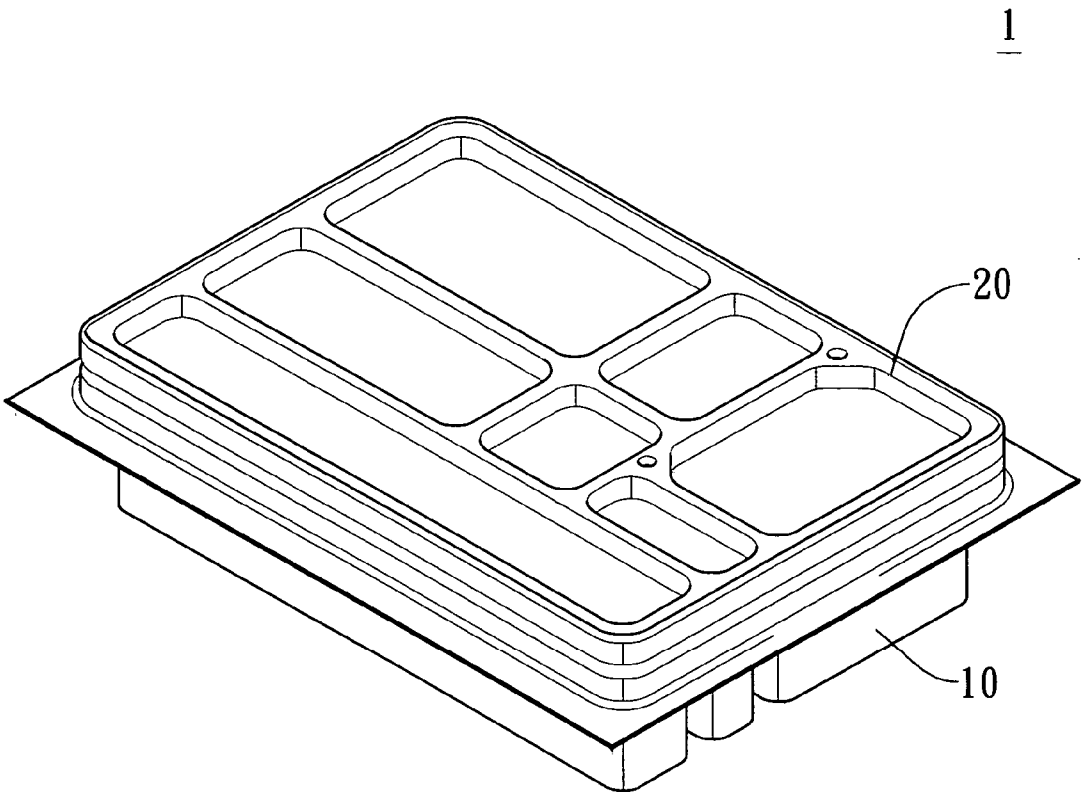


Fig. 8

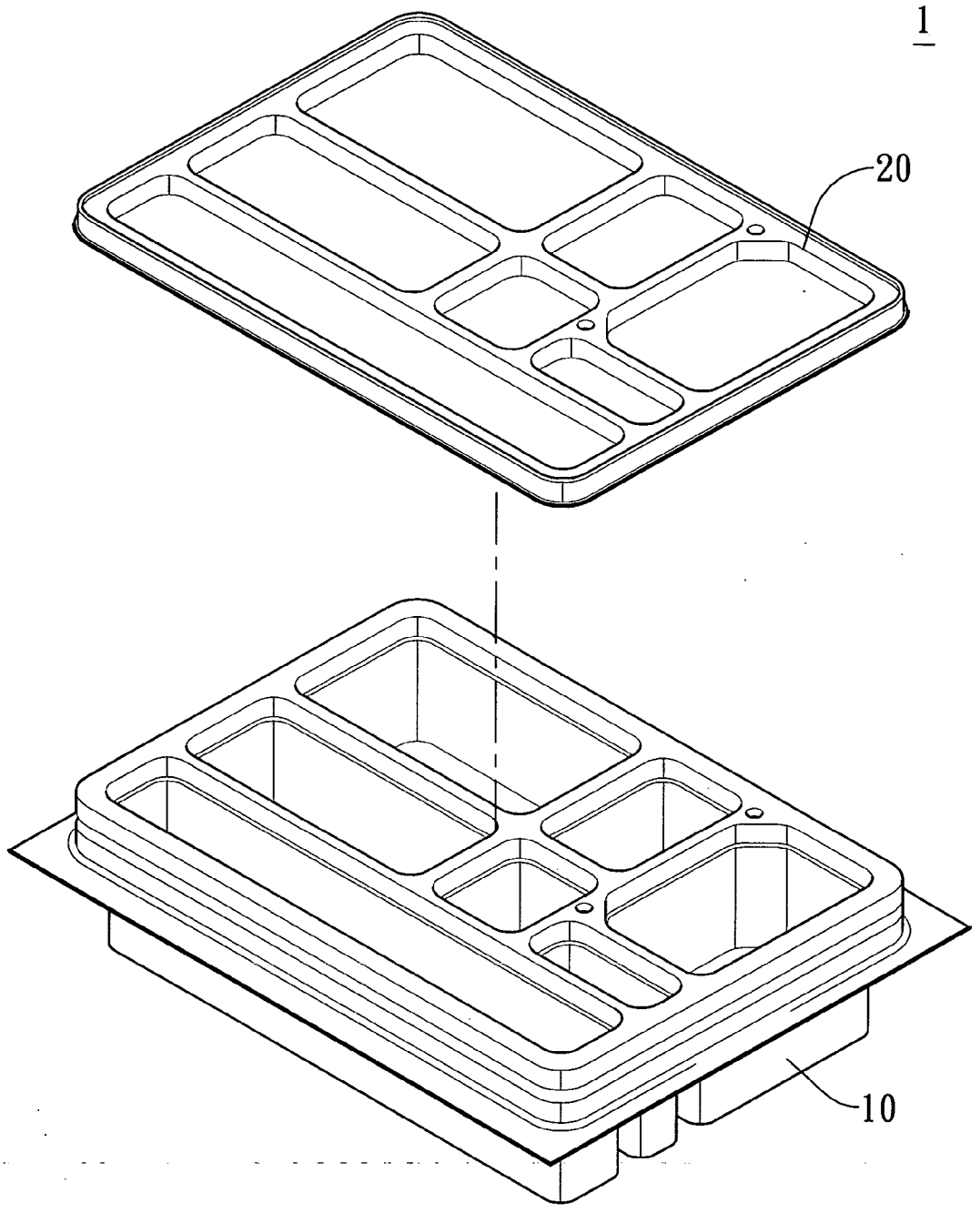


Fig. 9

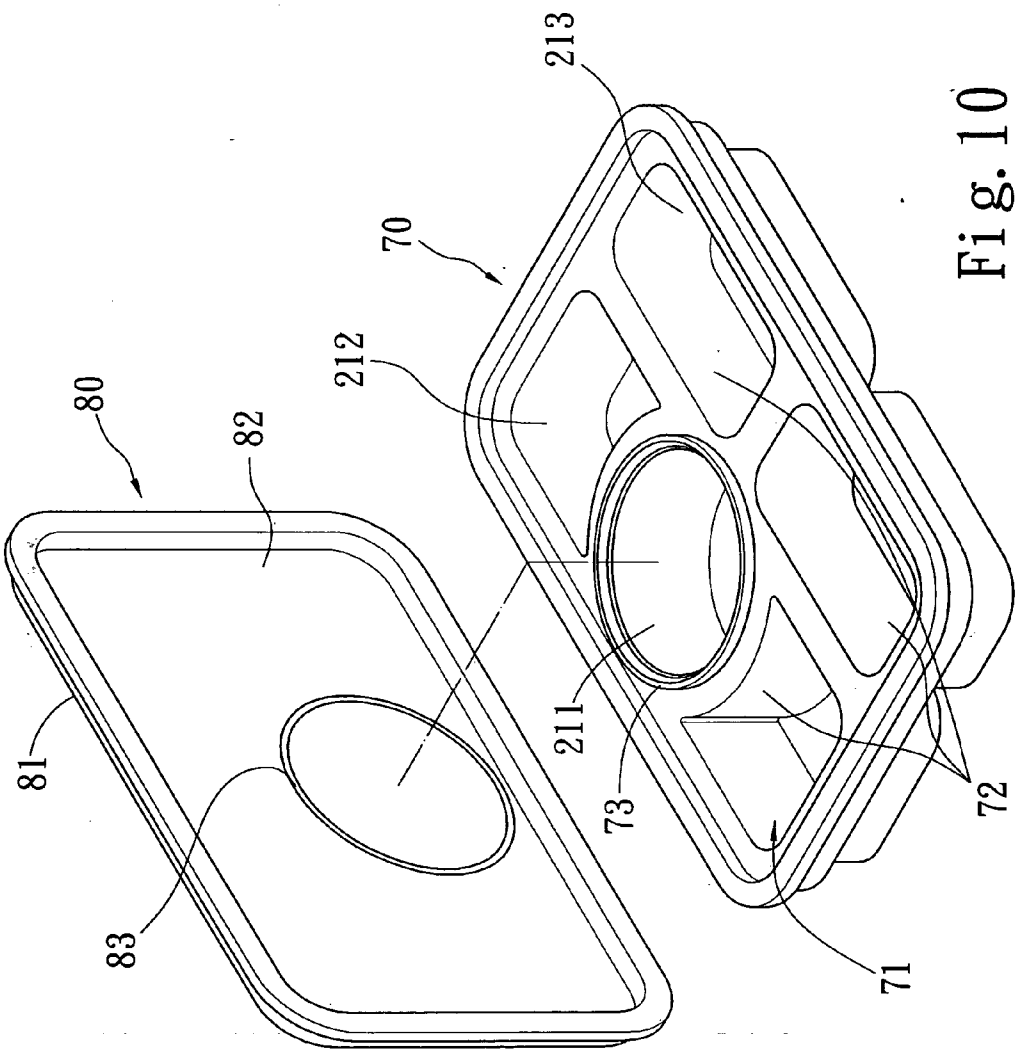


Fig. 10

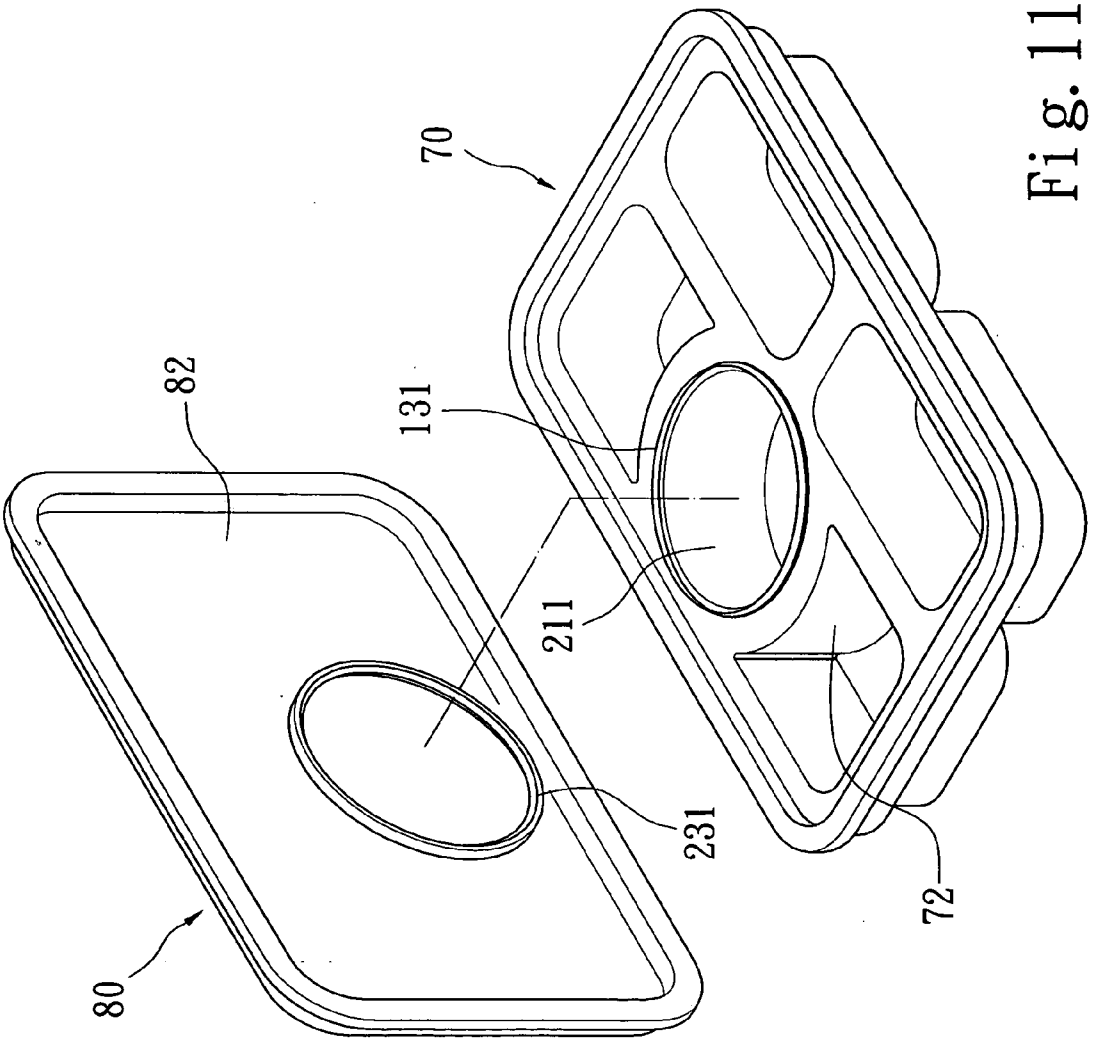


Fig. 11

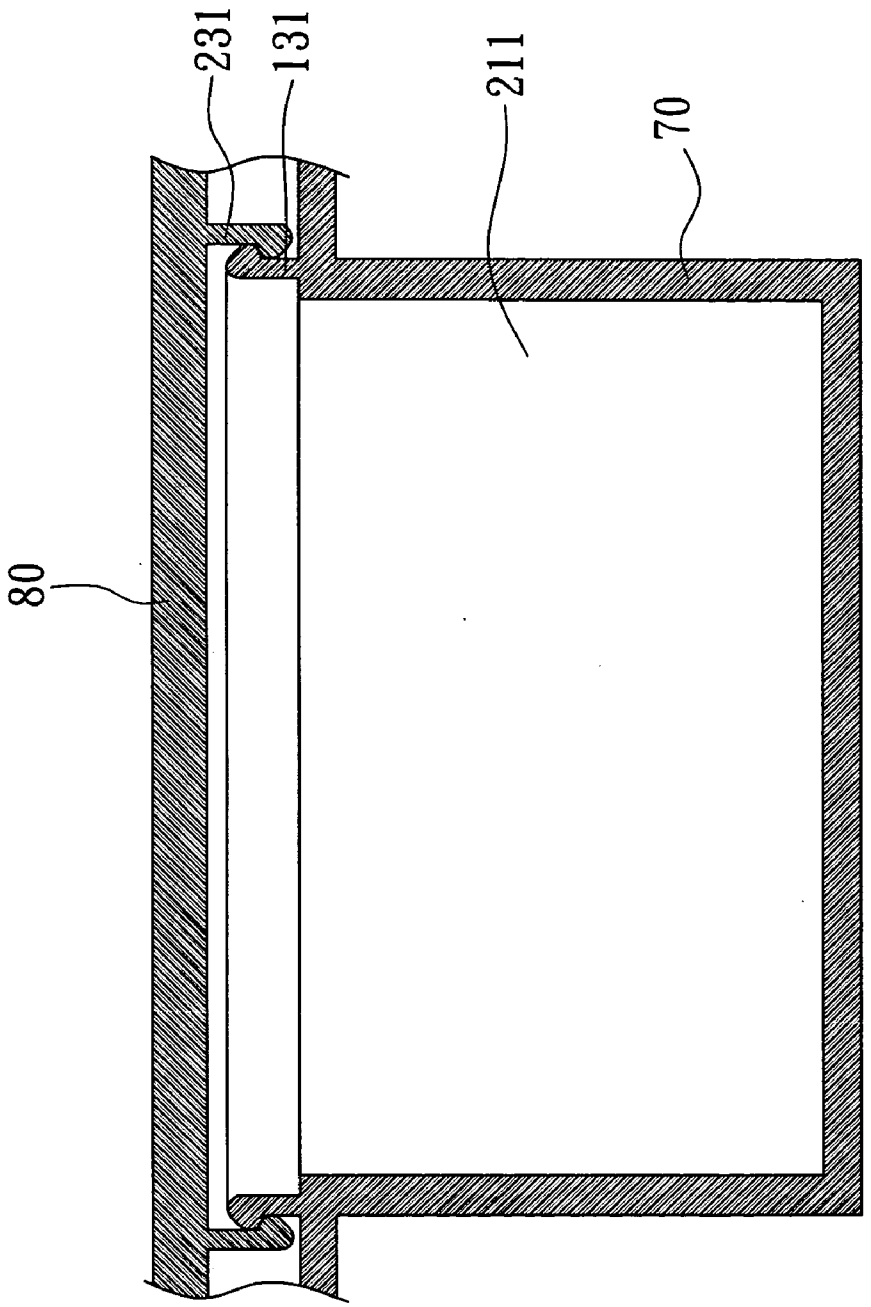


Fig. 12

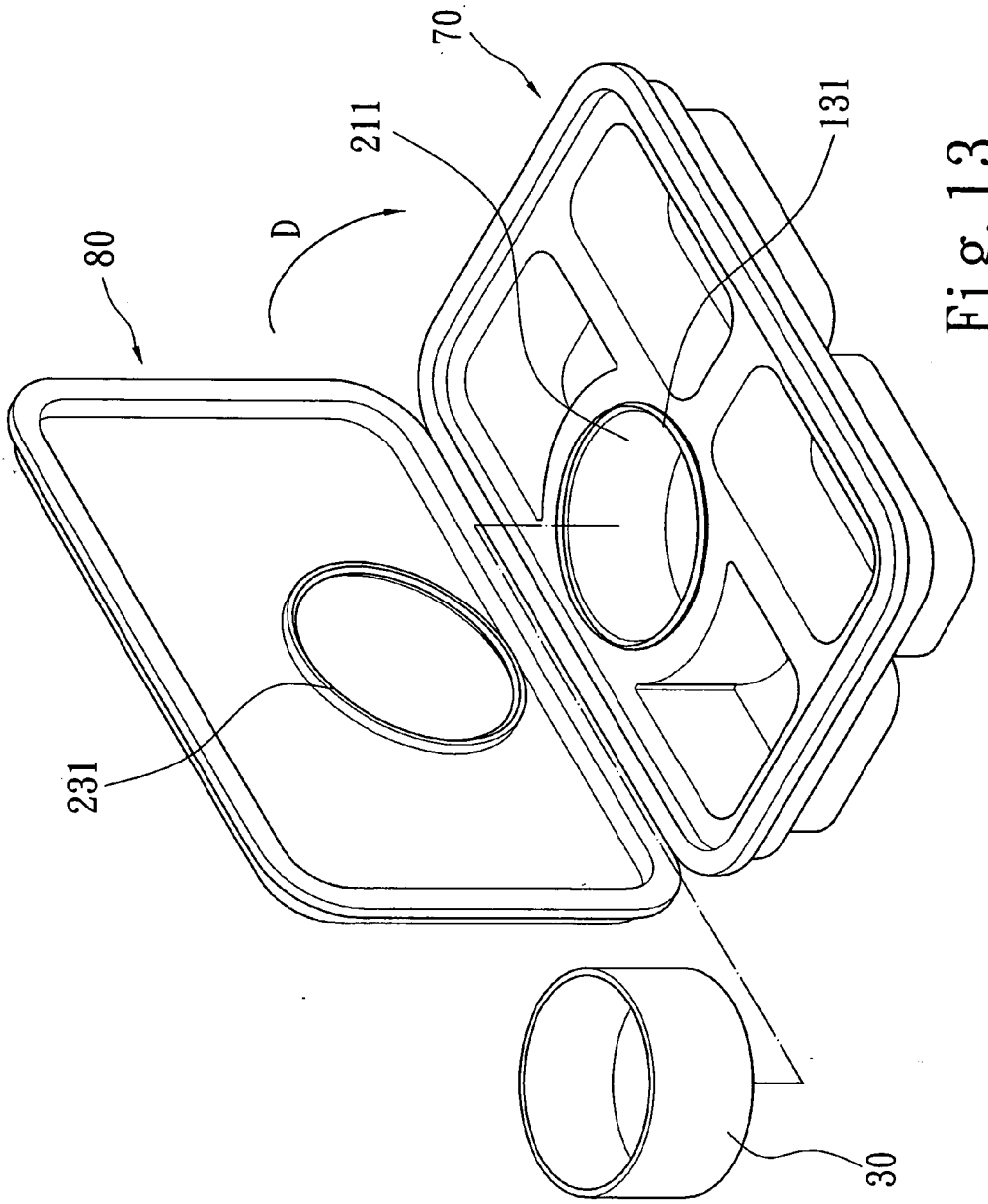


Fig. 13

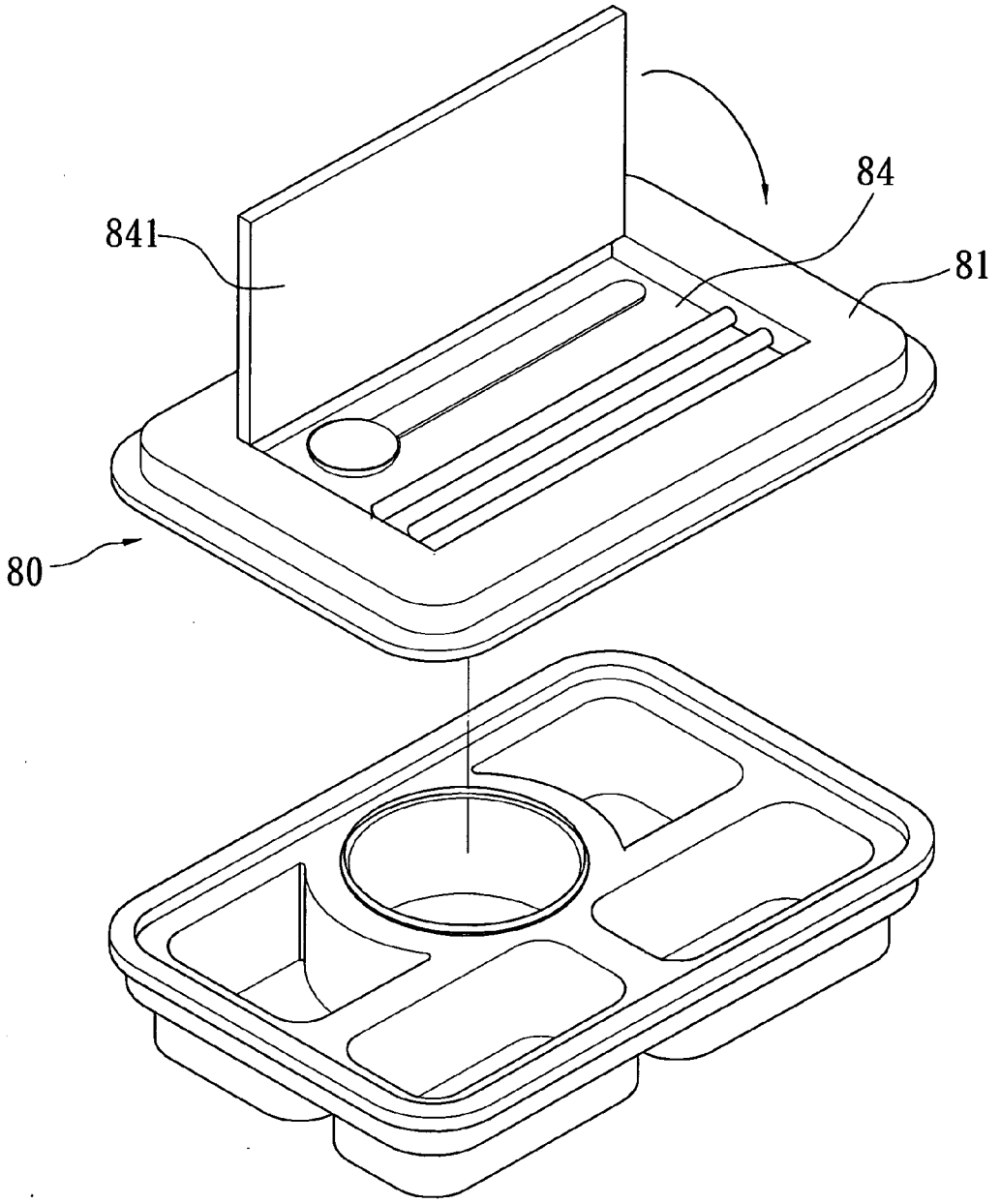


Fig. 14

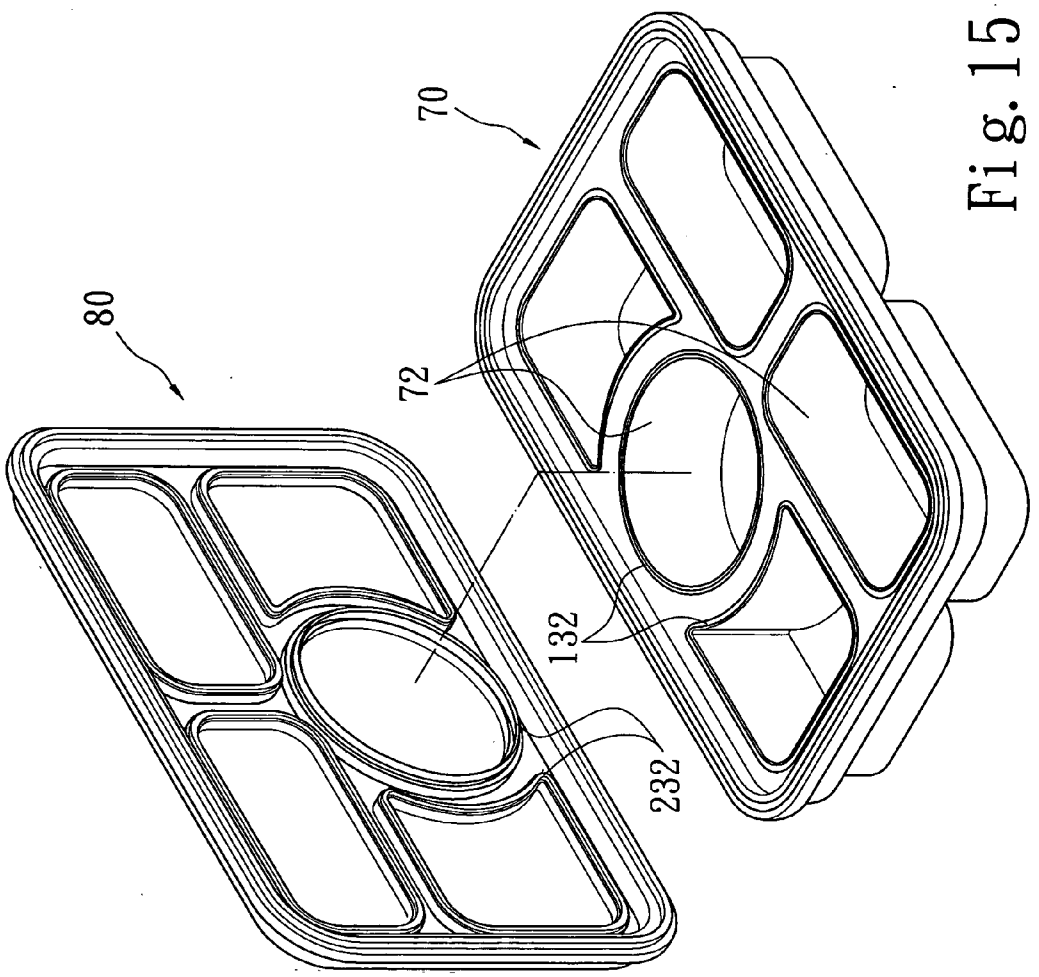


Fig. 15

LUNCH BOX

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0001] 1. Field of the Invention

[0002] The present invention relates to a lunch box, and more particularly to a lunch box for storing therein soup and cooked food. The soup or food juices therein will not spill or mingle, the lunch box can be a lunch box used in our daily life or the like.

[0003] 2. Description of the Prior Art

[0004] Lunch boxes are one kind of utensils necessary for meals. The conventional structure of lunch box is only a container for storing therein food and it has a cover able to cover the container. The lunch box mostly is made of metal (such as stainless steel). However, due to various requirements, the structure of a lunch box has been variant; for example, a dual layer lunch box has a first layer that is a deeper container to be used for receiving staple food (rice or noodle), and has a second layer that is a shallower container to be hung on the periphery of the first layer, the second layer is divided into several receiving areas for receiving cooked meats and vegetables. Thus, the staple food, the cooked meats and vegetables are separated with one another to have their flavor and tastes maintained. Certainly, there are many kinds of lunch boxes such as heat maintaining lunch boxes or portable lunch boxes etc.

[0005] Modern people in busy lives, particularly students and those nine-to-fivers, hardly have time to prepare meals in lunch boxes. This makes increased population of people who are eating outside homes or offices. Presently, containers to be stored therein food for eating outside homes or offices mostly are the lunch boxes capable of being heated by microwave ovens, such as those lunch boxes sold in convenient stores and they are mainly made of PP (polypropylene); and such lunch boxes mostly are provided only with a plurality of separated spaces for receiving staple food or cooked meats and vegetables except independent space for receiving soup. Even when there is independent space for receiving soup, the soup is stored in a cup covered with a small cover to avoid being toppling over to have the soup spilled out during carrying in a road.

[0006] Although providing cups for storing therein soups increases the vendibility of lunch boxes, it also increases the cost of production of the lunch boxes, if including the costs of soup cups, cup covers, and the time for covering the covers on the soup cups.

[0007] Therefore, to provide a lunch box to store therein food including soup and repast directly is the main goal of the present invention.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0008] The primary objective of the present invention is to provide a lunch box provided at least with a space for storing therein soup, and the soup will not spill after storing.

[0009] The secondary objective of the present invention is to provide a lunch box in which repast and food juices will not spill or mingle.

[0010] Another objective of the present invention is to provide a lunch box that can have heat therein maintained, have coldness therein maintained, and have freshness of soup and repast therein maintained too.

[0011] A further objective of the present invention is to provide a lunch box that can be formed a set of handle for easy carrying in a simple way.

[0012] Therefore, in order to achieve the above objectives, the lunch box structure of the present invention comprises: a receptacle and a cover able to cover the receptacle. The receptacle is provided therein with partitions to divide the receptacle into a plurality of receiving spaces. In which a receiving space is used to store therein soup and the remaining spaces are used to store therein cooked rice or repast. The cover is formed thereon downwardly recessed areas in corresponding to and in opposition respectively to the receiving spaces of the receptacle; the bottoms or peripheries of the cover and the partitions of the receiving spaces of the receptacle at the positions opposite respectively to those of the bottoms or peripheries are provided with engaging means for mutual engaging, so that the cover and the receptacle can be tightly engaged with each other to prevent spilling of soup.

[0013] One feature of the present invention resides in that: a plurality of outwardly protruding areas formed between the recessed areas on the upper surface of the cover and the receiving spaces on the bottom surface of the receptacle of the lunch box are enveloped with heat insulating material for having heat therein maintained, having coldness therein maintained, and having freshness of soup and repast therein maintained too.

[0014] Another feature of the present invention resides in that: a flange encircles the periphery of the receptacle, the flange is provided with a tearing line, in order that a part of the flange can be torn off along the tearing line to form a set of handle.

[0015] Another feature of the present invention resides in that: the periphery of the cover protrudes upwards to form a circle of protruding wall; the inner wall surface of the protruding wall has a circling recess to allow a planar sheet to be embedded therein to seal the upper surface of the cover. And the surface of the planar sheet can be printed thereon with advertisement letters or patterns.

[0016] The present invention will be apparent in its content and effect to be achieved after reading the detailed description of the preferred embodiment thereof in reference to the accompanying drawings.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0017] **FIG. 1** is a perspective view of a first embodiment of lunch box of the present invention before assembling;

[0018] **FIG. 2** is a perspective view of the first embodiment of lunch box of the present invention after assembling;

[0019] **FIGS. 3A and 3B** are sectional schematic views showing engagement of elements of the first embodiment of lunch box of the present invention (respectively before and after engagement);

[0020] **FIG. 4** is a sectional view taken from a sectional line **3-3** in **FIG. 1** to show that the lunch box is enveloped with heat insulating material;

[0021] **FIG. 5** is a perspective schematic view of the present invention showing some recessed areas of an embodiment of the present invention are used for receiving some tableware.

[0022] **FIG. 6** is a partially enlarged perspective schematic view of **FIG. 5**;

[0023] **FIG. 7** is a schematic perspective view of an embodiment of the present invention with a set of handle formed in a simple way;

[0024] **FIG. 8** is a perspective view showing the appearance when a plurality of lunch boxes of the present invention are piled together;

[0025] **FIG. 9** is a perspective view of the present invention before assembling showing another status of using;

[0026] **FIG. 10** is a perspective view of another embodiment of lunch box of the present invention before assembling showing the elements therein, and showing that an area for receiving soup is provided with a first engaging means (ridged portion) and that the cover is formed thereon at an area in opposition to that of the first engaging means a second engaging means (recessed portion);

[0027] **FIG. 11** shows a perspective view of another embodiment of the present invention, wherein the first engaging means is a first lip protruding out of the top of a partition, while the second engaging means is a second lip protruding out of the bottom of the cover; thereby a force can be exerted to cover the cover on the receptacle to render the first and the second lip to tightly engage with each other;

[0028] **FIG. 12** is a schematic sectional view taken from **FIG. 11** showing engagement of the first engaging means with the second engaging means;

[0029] **FIG. 13** is a schematic perspective view of an embodiment of the present invention showing that one side of the cover is adapted to connecting with one side of the receptacle to allow direct turning over of the cover on the receptacle for tight covering;

[0030] **FIG. 14** is a perspective view of another embodiment of the present invention showing that the cover of a lunch box is provided thereon with another recessed area for receiving tableware; and

[0031] **FIG. 15** is a schematic perspective view of another embodiment of the present invention showing that the partition around each receiving space has on its top a recessed portion, while the cover is formed thereon at an area in opposition to that of the receiving space a ridged portion.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT

[0032] Referring firstly to **FIGS. 1, 2, 3**A and 3B showing perspective views before and after assembling and sectional schematic views before and after engagement of elements of a first embodiment of lunch box **1** of the present invention, the lunch box **1** comprises: a receptacle **10** and a cover **20** able to cover the receptacle **10**.

[0033] The receptacle **10** is provided therein with partitions **11** to divide the receptacle **10** into a plurality of receiving spaces **111**, **112** and **113** etc. Each of the receiving spaces **111**, **112** and **113** has a first height "H" for receiving staple food (such as rice or noodle) or cooked meats and vegetables. In which the receiving space **113** is used to store therein soup or some other food juices.

[0034] The cover **20** is formed downwardly recessed areas **23***a*, **23***b* and **23***c* etc. in corresponding to and in opposition respectively to the receiving spaces **113**, **112** and **111** etc. of the receptacle **10**. Each of the recessed areas **23***a*, **23***b* and **23***c* has a second height "h" which is smaller than the height "H", in order that each of the receiving spaces **111**, **112** and **113** etc. has a sufficient space for receiving food. The bottoms or peripheries of the recessed areas **23***a*, **23***b* and **23***c* of the cover **20** and the partitions **11** of the receiving spaces **113**, **112** and **111** of the receptacle **10** at the positions opposite respectively to those of the bottoms or peripheries are provided with engaging means for mutual engaging. So that the cover **20** and the receptacle **10** can be tightly engaged with each other to prevent soup or food juices in the receiving spaces **111**, **112** and **113** from spilling outside or mingling.

[0035] In one embodiment, for the purpose of tight engaging of the cover **20** with the receptacle **10**, the partition **11** on the periphery of each of the receiving spaces **111**, **112** and **113** is provided thereon with a first engaging means which is defined a stepped portion **14** provided on the inner wall of the partition **11**. Each stepped portion **14** includes a first surface **141** and a second surface **142** having therebetween an angle that preferably is an acute included angle θ1 having preferably between 80-89 degrees.

[0036] The cover **20** includes an upper surface **21** and a lower surface **22**. The lower surface **22** is provided thereon with a plurality of second engaging means in opposition respectively to those of first engaging means when the cover **20** covers the receptacle **10**. In this embodiment, the plurality of second engaging means take advantage of downwardly recessing of the upper surface **21** of the cover **20** to protrude downwardly out of the lower surface **22** of the cover **20**. Thereby the lower surface **22** of the cover **20** forms bottoms **221** and peripheries **222**. Between each of the bottoms **221** and the peripheries **222** is an obtuse included angle θ2 which is preferably a supplementary angle to the acute included angle θ1. Hence when the cover **20** covers the receptacle **10**, the bottoms **221** protruding downwardly out of the lower surface **22** of the cover **20** and the peripheries **222** can exactly be firmly engaged with the stepped portions **14** to make tight engaging of the cover **20** with the receptacle **10**, so that soup and food juices in the receiving spaces **111**, **112** and **113** do not spill outside nor mingle

[0037] In another embodiment, each first engaging means can be provided on the top of each partition **11**; while each second engaging means can be provided on the bottom of the cover **20** at each corresponding position to that of the first engaging means respectively to engage with the latter (this will be described hereinafter).

[0038] Referring to **FIG. 4**, a plurality of outwardly protruding areas formed between the recessed areas **23***a*, **23***b* and **23***c* of the cover **20** of the lunch box **1** and the receiving spaces **111**, **112** and **113** on the bottom surface of the receptacle **10** are enveloped with heat insulating material **50**, **50***a* for having heat in the receptacle **10** maintained, having coldness therein maintained, and having freshness therein maintained too. When the embodiment in **FIG. 4** is provided

with heat insulating or heat maintaining material, the lunch box **1** of the present invention can be used as a container of ice products such as ice cream etc.

[**0039**] And referring to **FIG. 5**, the recessed areas **23***a*, **23***b* and **23***c* formed on the upper surface **21** of the cover **20** can be used to receive therein tissue papers **44**, tableware (such as chopsticks **40** and spoons **41** etc.), flavoring packs **42** and tooth picks **43** etc.

[**0040**] Referring to **FIG. 6**, the periphery of the cover **20** has a circle of upwardly protruding wall **25**; the inner wall surface of the protruding wall **25** has a circling recess **251** to allow a planar sheet **27** to be embedded therein to close the upper surface **21** of the cover **20**, this can keep neat of the tableware and avoid scattering of the things (the tableware **40**, **41**, flavoring packs **42** and tooth picks **43** etc) in the receiving spaces **111**, **112** and **113**. And the surface of the planar sheet **27** can be printed thereon with advertisement letters or patterns **271** etc.

[**0041**] And again referring to **FIG. 1**, a flange **60** encircles the periphery of the receptacle **10**. The flange **60** is provided with a tearing line **61**, in order that a part of the flange **60** can be torn off along the tearing line **61** to form a set of handle, such as is shown in **FIG. 7**. Forming of the tearing line **61** is performed in pressing of a mold; a predetermined area of the flange **60** is pressed to be particularly thin to be beneficial for tearing the flange **60** by a user.

[**0042**] When in practicing, the lunch box **1** can be used to store therein any food including solid food and food juices. Alternatively, a lunch box able to avoid the food juices in the receiving spaces **111**, **112** and **113** to mingle can further be used as a freshness keeping container to reduce possibility of mingling of flavors in the receiving spaces **111**, **112** and **113**. And therefore the lunch box can be used as a portable food container.

[**0043**] Moreover, again referring to **FIG. 8**, the outwardly protruding areas formed from the receiving spaces **113**, **112** and **111** on the bottom surface of the receptacle **10** are in corresponding and in opposition respectively to the recessed areas **23***a*, **23***b* and **23***c* of the cover **20** of the lunch box **1**. Therefore, a plurality of lunch boxes can be piled up one on another conveniently. Such as is shown in **FIG. 9**, in practical application, a plurality of receptacles **10** can be used for receiving cooked meats, vegetables and staple food, while only the uppermost receptacle **10** has a cover **20** placed thereon.

[**0044**] The material of the lunch box **1** can be PP (polypropylene) to be heated in a microwave oven or to be free of washing and to be discarded, or can be any other materials suitable for recycled using.

[**0045**] Referring to **FIG. 10** showing another embodiment of lunch box of the present invention, the lunch box comprises a receptacle **70** and a cover **80** able to cover the receptacle **70**.

[**0046**] The receptacle **70** is a food container having a receiving unit **71**, partitions **72** are provided inside of the receiving unit **71** to divide the receptacle **70** into a plurality of receiving spaces **211**, **212**, **213** for receiving staple food (rice or noodle) or cooked meats and vegetables, wherein one receiving space **211** is used particularly to store therein soup.

[**0047**] The receiving space **211** used particularly to store therein soup has on its top periphery a circle of ridged portion **73** forming a first engaging means. The cover **80** has thereon an upper surface **81** and a lower surface **82**; the lower surface **82** is provided thereon with a recessed portion **83** forming a second engaging means in opposition to the ridged portion **73** of the first engaging means. When the cover **80** covers the receptacle **70**, the first engaging means can have tight engaging with the second engaging means by embedding of the ridged portion **73** in the recessed portion **83**, and thereby soup in the receiving space **211** does not spill outside.

[**0048**] And as shown in **FIG. 11**, the first engaging means of the receptacle **70** can be a first lip **131** with a reversely hooking edge protruding out of the top of the partitions **72**, while the second engaging means of the cover **80** can be a second lip **231** with a reversely hooking edge protruding out of the bottom **82** of the cover **80**. Thereby a force can be exerted to cover the cover **80** on the receptacle **70** to render the first and the second lips **131**, **231** to tightly engage with each other. Thereby soup in the receiving space **211** does not spill outside (as shown in **FIG. 12**).

[**0049**] The cover **80** can also be integrally formed with the receptacle **70**, i.e., one side of the cover **80** is connected with one side of the receptacle **70**, such as is shown in **FIG. 13**, to allow direct turning over of the cover **80** along a direction "D" on the receptacle **70** for tight covering by mutual engaging between the first and the second lips **131**, **231**. Such designing renders a person of the art of food and beverage to directly cover the cover **80** onto the receptacle **70** after placing in staple food, cooked meats, vegetables and soup sequentially. There is no need of an additional means such as rubber rings etc. to fix the cover **80** onto the receptacle **70**. Thereby packing speed for lunch boxes can be increased. Certainly, the periphery of the receptacle **70** can be provided with any means that can fixedly engage the cover **80** onto the receptacle **70** without helping of additional rubber rings.

[**0050**] Although the receiving space **211** can be used to receive soup, a conventional soup cup **30** can still be placed therein. In this way, people of the art of food and beverage can flexibly use soup cups in manufacturing lunch boxes.

[**0051**] And referring to **FIG. 14**, the upper surface **81** of the cover **80** can be provided thereon with a recessed area **84** for receiving tableware (such as chopsticks and spoons etc.). The recessed area **84** can also be added thereon with a lid **841** to keep neat of the tableware. The recessed area **84** can also be added therein with clamping means for stably clamping the tableware (not shown). Certainly, one of the above stated plural receiving spaces can also be used as a tableware receiving space (not shown).

[**0052**] In practicing, the tops of all the partitions **72** can further be provided with first engaging means and second engaging means. Referring to **FIG. 15**, it shows that each of the partitions **72** of the receptacle **70** has on its top a continuous circle of a recessed portion **132**. The lower surface **82** of the cover **80** can be provided thereon with a circle of ridged portion **232** in corresponding to and in opposition to the recessed portion **132**; thereby when the cover **20** covers the receptacle **10**, the ridged portion **232** is tightly engaged in the recessed portion **132** to prevent food juices in the receiving spaces from spilling outside or mingling.

Therefore, the present invention has the following advantages:

[0053] 1. The structure of lunch box of the present invention renders the bottoms or peripheries of the recessed areas of the cover to be engaged with the partitions of the receiving spaces of the receptacle at the positions opposite respectively to those of the bottoms or peripheries, so that a well-engaging lunch box is formed and soup therein is prevented from spilling outside.

[0054] 2. The lunch box is different from the conventional lunch boxes, it can be directly stored therein soup, and can be fast assembled and detached by providing the mutually engageable first and second engaging means to form a fast assembling and detaching lunch box structure. This saves the cost of the requisition to use a soup cup, and omits the step of covering a cover onto the soup cup, and to thereby save the time in manufacturing each of such a lunch box.

[0055] 3. The lunch box at least can have excellent tight engaging at the tops of the partitions after storing soup by precise engagement of the first and the second engaging means. And this idea can be extended to apply to each receiving space, hence food juices in staple food, cooked meats and vegetables will not mingle, so that the staple food, the cooked meats and the vegetables can surely keep their original flavors and tastes.

[0056] 4. The lunch box can be made a discardable one to achieve an objective of simplifying and convenience. Alternatively, it can be made a lunch box able to use repeatedly to obtain an environment-friendly objective.

[0057] 5. The lunch box is enveloped therearound heat insulating material to have heat therein maintained, have coldness therein maintained, and have freshness therein maintained too.

[0058] 6. The lunch box is provided thereon with a simple set of handle in favor of carrying.

[0059] In conclusion, according to the description disclosed and drawings above, the present invention surely can achieve the expected objectives thereof to provide a lunch box able to store therein soup and food juices of repast in the receiving spaces is prevented from mingling.

[0060] The embodiment stated above is only for illustrating the present invention, it will be apparent to those skilled in this art that various equivalent modifications or changes according to the idea of and without departing from the disclosing and teaching of this invention shall also fall within technical scope of the appended claims.

What is claimed is:

1. A lunch box comprising: a receptacle and a cover, said receptacle is provided therein with partitions to divide said receptacle into a plurality of receiving spaces, in which one of said receiving spaces is used to store therein soup, the remaining of said receiving spaces are used to store therein other foods, said cover includes an upper surface and a lower surface, said lunch box is characterized in that:

said cover is formed thereon downwardly recessed areas in corresponding to and in opposition respectively to said receiving spaces of said receptacle; bottoms or peripheries of said receiving spaces of said cover and said partitions of said receiving spaces of said receptacle at positions opposite respectively to those of said bottoms or peripheries are provided with engaging means for mutual engaging, so that said cover and said receptacle are tightly engaging with each other to prevent spilling of soup.

2. The lunch box as in claim 1, wherein: said partitions of said receiving spaces of said receptacle are provided thereon with a plurality of first engaging means which have stepped portions on inner walls of said partitions, said lower surface of said cover is provided thereon with a plurality of second engaging means in opposition to said first engaging means, said second engaging means take advantage of downwardly recessing of said upper surface of said cover to protrude downwardly out of said lower surface of said cover.

3. The lunch box as in claim 1, wherein: each of said partitions is provided thereon with a first engaging means, a plurality of second engaging means are provided in opposition respectively to those said first engaging means, so that food juices in said receiving spaces does not spill outside nor mingle.

4. The lunch box as in claim 1, wherein: said recessed areas of said cover are used to receive therein tableware and flavoring packs.

5. The lunch box as in claim 1, wherein: a plurality of outwardly protruding areas formed between said recessed areas of said cover of said lunch box and said receiving spaces on said bottom surface of said receptacle are enveloped with heat insulating material for heat maintaining, coldness keeping and freshness keeping.

6. The lunch box as in claim 1, wherein: said heat insulating material is foam sponge.

7. The lunch box as in claim 1, wherein: a flange encircles a periphery of said receptacle, said flange is provided with a tearing line, in order that said flange is adapted to being torn off a part of it along said tearing line to form a set of handle.

8. The lunch box as in claim 1, wherein: a surrounding periphery of said cover protrudes upwards to form a circle of protruding wall, an inner wall surface of said protruding wall has a circling recess to allow a planar sheet to be embedded therein to seal said upper surface of said cover.

9. The lunch box as in claim 8, wherein: a surface of said planar sheet is printed thereon with advertisement letters or patterns.

10. A lunch box comprising: a receptacle and a cover, said receptacle is provided therein with partitions to divide said receptacle into a plurality of receiving spaces, in which one of said receiving spaces is used to store therein soup, the remaining of said receiving spaces are used to store therein other kinds of foods, said cover includes an upper surface and a lower surface, said lunch box is characterized in that:

said receptacle is provided at least on one of said partitions of said receiving spaces to store therein soup with a first engaging means; a lower surface of said cover is provided thereon with a second engaging means in opposition to said first engaging means, when said cover covers said receptacle, said first and second engaging means are tightly engaged with each other to prevent spilling of soup.

11. The lunch box as in claim 10, wherein: said first engaging means has a stepped portion on an inner wall of said one of said partitions, said second engaging means takes

advantage of downwardly recessing of said upper surface of said cover to protrude downwardly out of said lower surface of said cover.

12. The lunch box as in claim 10, wherein: said first engaging means is provided on a top of said one of said partitions, said second engaging means is provided on said lower surface of said cover in opposition to said first engaging means in order that said first engaging means is engaged with said second engaging means.

13. The lunch box as in claim 10, wherein: said partitions of all said receiving spaces each is provided with a first engaging means as said first engaging means, and a plurality of second engaging means as said second engaging means are provided on said lower surface of said cover in opposition respectively to all said first engaging means, so that food juices in said receiving spaces of said lunch box does not spill outside or mingle.

14. The lunch box as in claim 10, wherein: said first engaging means is a ridged portion, while said second engaging means is a recessed portion for inserting of said ridged portion therein.

15. The lunch box as in claim 10, wherein: said second engaging means is a ridged portion, while said first engaging means is a recessed portion for inserting of said ridged portion therein.

16. The lunch box as in claim 10, wherein: said first engaging means is a first lip protruding out of a top of on one of said partitions, while said second engaging means is a second lip protruding out of a bottom of said cover; thereby a force exerted to cover said cover on said receptacle renders said first and said second engaging means to tightly engage with each other.

17. The lunch box as in claim 10, wherein: one side of said cover is adapted to engaging with one side of said receptacle to allow direct turning over of said cover on said receptacle for tight covering.

18. The lunch box as in claim 10, wherein: said one of said receiving spaces used to store therein soup is further placed separately therein with a soup cup.

19. The lunch box as in claim 10, wherein: one of said receiving spaces is used for receiving tableware.

20. The lunch box as in claim 10, wherein: said cover is provided thereon with a recessed area for receiving tableware.

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