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Circuit board electrical connector

Abstract

A circuit board electrical connector includes: a plurality of terminals; a fixed housing fixed to a circuit board via the terminals; and a movable housing relatively movable with respect to the fixed housing, in which the terminals are provided to be bridged between the fixed housing and the movable housing, the terminals include a fixed side held portion held by the fixed housing, a movable side held portion positioned on an inner side in a connector width direction than the fixed side held portion and held by the movable housing, and an elastically deformable intermediate portion positioned between the fixed side held portion and the movable side held portion, the intermediate portion includes at least one of elastic portions bent in a connector height direction, and a specific elastic portion of the elastic portions can abut on the fixed housing when being elastically deformed by a predetermined deformation amount.

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Background/Summary

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

(1) This application claims priority from Japanese Patent Application No. 2020-0015587 filed with the Japan Patent Office on Feb. 3, 2022, the entire content of which is hereby incorporated by reference.

BACKGROUND

1. Technical Field

(2) One aspect of the present disclosure relates to a circuit board electrical connector.

2. Related Art

(3) Japanese Patent No. 5568677, for example, discloses a so-called floating connector as a circuit board electrical connector disposed on a circuit board. A floating connector has a plurality of terminals, a fixed housing fixed to a circuit board via the terminals, and a movable housing relatively movable with respect to the fixed housing. Terminals are provided to be bridged between the fixed housing and the movable housing.

(4) In the floating connector of Japanese Patent No. 5568677, terminals are formed by punching a metal plate member in the plate thickness direction. The terminals are divided into a support portion held by the fixed housing at one end side, a base portion held by the movable housing at the other end side, and an elastic portion (movable portion) capable of elastic deformation positioned between the support portion and the base portion. The overall shape of the elastic portion is substantially U-shaped (see FIG. 5, FIG. 11, and the like of Japanese Patent No. 5568677). In this elastic portion, two leg portions of each elastic portion are displaced by widening or narrowing in the connector width direction (horizontal direction in FIG. 5 and FIG. 11 of Japanese Patent No. 5568677), and is elastically deformed in the connector width direction (see FIG. 11 of Japanese Patent No. 5568677).

(5) The fixed housing includes a side wall (long side wall) standing on the outer side of the elastic portion in the connector width direction over the range including the elastic portion in the vertical direction. A gap is formed between the side wall and the elastic portion in the connector width direction. By this gap, elastic deformation of the elastic portion toward the outer side in the connector width direction is allowed. This achieves floating in the connector width direction.

SUMMARY

(6) A circuit board electrical connector includes: a plurality of terminals; a fixed housing fixed to a circuit board via the terminals; and a movable housing relatively movable with respect to the fixed housing, in which the terminals are provided to be bridged between the fixed housing and the movable housing, the terminals include a fixed side held portion held by the fixed housing, a movable side held portion positioned on an inner side in a connector width direction than the fixed side held portion and held by the movable housing, and an elastically deformable intermediate portion positioned between the fixed side held portion and the movable side held portion, the intermediate portion includes at least one of elastic portions bent in a connector height direction, and a specific elastic portion of the elastic portions can abut on the fixed housing when being elastically deformed by a predetermined deformation amount.

Description

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

(1) FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a receptacle connector and a plug connector according to an embodiment of the present disclosure, illustrating a state before mating connection of both connectors;

(2) FIG. 2 is a cross-sectional view illustrating a cross section of the receptacle connector and the plug connector of FIG. 1 taken along a plane perpendicular to a terminal arrangement direction, illustrating a state before the mating connection of the both connectors;

- (3) FIG. 3 is a perspective view of a receptacle terminal of the receptacle connector of FIG. 1;
- (4) FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view illustrating the cross section of the receptacle connector and the plug connector of FIG. 1 taken along the plane perpendicular to the terminal arrangement direction, illustrating a mating connection state of the both connectors;
- (5) FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view illustrating the cross section of the receptacle connector and the plug connector of FIG. 1 taken along the plane perpendicular to the terminal arrangement direction, FIG. 5 illustrates a state in which floating occurs in a connector width direction due to vibration received during use of a connector;
- (6) FIG. 6 is a cross-sectional view illustrating the cross section of the receptacle connector and the plug connector of FIG. 1 taken along the plane perpendicular to the terminal arrangement direction, FIG. 6 illustrates a state in which floating occurs in a connector height direction due to vibration received during use of a connector;
- (7) FIG. 7 is a cross-sectional view illustrating the cross section of the receptacle connector and the plug connector of FIG. 1 taken along the plane perpendicular to the terminal arrangement direction, FIG. 7 illustrates a state in which floating occurs in the connector width direction at a time when the mating connection of a connector is completed.
- (8) FIG. 8 is a cross-sectional view illustrating a cross section of a receptacle connector according to a second embodiment of the present disclosure taken along the plane perpendicular to the terminal arrangement direction; and
- (9) FIG. 9 is a cross-sectional view illustrating the cross section of the receptacle connector of FIG. 8 and a plug connector mated and connected to the receptacle connector taken along the plane perpendicular to the terminal arrangement direction, illustrating a state in which a floating is occurring in the connector width direction by vibration received during use of a connector.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

(10) In the following detailed description, for purpose of explanation, numerous specific details are set forth in order to provide a thorough understanding of the disclosed embodiments. It will be apparent, however, that one or more embodiments may be practiced without these specific details. In other instances, well-known structures and devices are schematically shown in order to simplify the drawing.

(11) In general, floating connectors are often used in vibrating environments (for example, vehicles). In such a floating connector, the elastic deformation of the terminals suppresses the influence of vibration. However, when the frequency of vibration generated in a vehicle and the like becomes close to the natural frequency of the terminal, resonance occurs in the terminal. As a result, the elastic portion repeats being deformed rapidly and significantly. In a case where such a rapid and significant deformation exceeds the limit of deformation of the elastic portion, in other words, the maximum amount of elastic deformation, damage to the elastic portion due to plastic deformation, and the like is likely to occur.

(12) One object of the present disclosure is to provide a circuit board electrical connector that can favorably suppress the occurrence of resonance in the terminal.

(13) A circuit board electrical connector according to the present disclosure (the circuit board electrical connector) includes: a plurality of terminals; a fixed housing fixed to a circuit board via the terminals; and a movable housing relatively movable with respect to the fixed housing, in which the terminals are provided to be bridged between the fixed housing and the movable housing.

(14) In the circuit board electrical connector, the terminals include a fixed side held portion held by the fixed housing, a movable side held portion positioned on an inner side in a connector width direction than the fixed side held portion and held by the movable housing, and an elastically deformable intermediate portion positioned between the fixed side held portion and the movable side held portion, the intermediate portion includes at least one of elastic portions bent in a connector height direction, and a specific elastic portion of the elastic portions can abut on the

fixed housing when being elastically deformed by a predetermined deformation amount.

(15) When the frequency of vibration generated in the usage environment of the connector approaches the natural frequency of the terminal, the amount of deformation of the intermediate portion of the terminal increases. In this circuit board electrical connector, the specific elastic portion formed in the intermediate portion of the terminal abuts on the housing when it is elastically deformed by a predetermined deformation amount. Therefore, further deformation of the specific elastic portion is restricted. In the state in which the specific elastic portion abuts on the housing, the intermediate portion of the terminal is elastically deformable not in the entire portion but in a part of it. Therefore, in the state in which the specific elastic portion abuts on the housing, the spring length of the intermediate portion is shorter than in the case where there is no abutment. As a result, the natural frequency of the terminal increases. In other words, when the specific elastic portion abuts on the housing, difference in the frequency of vibration occurring in the usage environment of the connector and the natural frequency of the terminal becomes large. Therefore, resonance is less likely to occur than before abutment. Therefore, since the intermediate portion is not excessively deformed, damage to the terminal due to plastic deformation and the like is suppressed.

(16) In the circuit board electrical connector, the fixed housing may include a side wall positioned on an outer side in the connector width direction than the specific elastic portion to have a range overlapping with the specific elastic portion of the intermediate portion in the connector height direction, and the elastic portion may be able to abut on the side wall when being elastically deformed by a predetermined deformation amount outward in the connector width direction.

(17) In this configuration, the specific elastic portion can abut on the side wall. In this case, the specific elastic portion formed in the intermediate portion of the terminal abuts on the side wall of the fixed housing when being elastically deformed by a predetermined deformation amount toward the outer side in the connector width direction. Therefore, further deformation of the specific elastic portion toward the outer side is restricted. In the state in which the specific elastic portion abuts on the side wall, the intermediate portion of the terminal is elastically deformable not in the entire portion but only from the abutment portion to a portion positioned on the inner side in the connector width direction. Therefore, in the state in which the specific elastic portion abuts on the side wall, the spring length of the intermediate portion is shorter than in the case where there is no abutment. As a result, the natural frequency of the terminal increases, making it easier to suppress the occurrence of resonance. Thus, the terminals are less likely to be damaged.

(18) In the circuit board electrical connector, the intermediate portion may include plurality of the elastic portions and the plurality of elastic portions may include a movable side elastic portion that is an elastic portion positioned between the specific elastic portion and the movable side held portion besides the specific elastic portion. In a case where this movable side elastic portion is provided, in a state in which the intermediate portion is elastically deformed and the specific elastic portion abuts on the side wall, the movable side elastic portion is included in the portion from the abutment position to the inner side in the connector width direction. Therefore, when the specific elastic portion abuts on the side wall, compared with the state before abutment, even in a where the spring length of the intermediate portion is shortened, sufficient floating amount can be ensured because the movable side elastic portion can be elastically deformable.

(19) In the circuit board electrical connector, the fixed housing may include a top wall positioned to have a range overlapping in the connector width direction at a position on a side away from the circuit board in the connector height direction with respect to the specific elastic portion of the intermediate portion, and the specific elastic portion may be able to abut on the top wall when being elastically deformed by a predetermined deformation amount toward the side away from the circuit board in the connector height direction.

(20) In this configuration, the specific elastic portion can abut on the top wall. In this case, the specific elastic portion abuts on the top wall of the fixed housing when being elastically deformed

by a predetermined deformation amount toward a side away from the circuit board in the connector height direction. Therefore, further deformation of the specific elastic portion toward the side away from the circuit board is restricted. In the state in which the specific elastic portion abuts on the top wall, the intermediate portion of the terminal is elastically deformable not in the entire portion but only from the abutment portion to a portion positioned on the inner side in the connector width direction. Therefore, in the state in which the specific elastic portion abuts on the top wall, the spring length of the intermediate portion is shorter than in the case where there is no abutment. As a result, the natural frequency of the terminal increases, making it easier to suppress the occurrence of resonance. Thus, the terminals are less likely to be damaged.

(21) In the circuit board electrical connector, the movable housing may be positioned on the inner side in the connector width direction than the specific elastic portion to have a range overlapping with the specific elastic portion of the intermediate portion in the connector height direction, and the specific elastic portion may be able to abut on the movable housing when being elastically deformable by a predetermined deformation amount in the connector width direction.

(22) When the mating connector deviates from the normal position in the connector width direction just before the mating connection with the connector and the mating connector, the movable housing of the connector moves in the direction of the deviation (floating). As described above, in a case where the specific elastic portion can abut on the movable housing, the specific elastic portion is elastically deformed by a predetermined deformation amount at the time of floating and abuts on the movable housing. In the state in which the specific elastic portion abuts on the movable housing, the intermediate portion of the terminal is elastically deformable not in the entire portion but only from the abutment portion to a portion positioned on the outer side in the connector width direction. Therefore, in the state in which the specific elastic portion abuts on the movable housing, the spring length of the intermediate portion is shorter than in the case where there is no abutment. As a result, the natural frequency of the terminal increases, making it easier to suppress the occurrence of resonance. Thus, the terminals are less likely to be damaged.

(23) In the circuit board electrical connector, the intermediate portion may include plurality of the elastic portions, and the plurality of elastic portions may include a fixed side elastic portion that is an elastic portion positioned between the specific elastic portion and the fixed side held portion besides the specific elastic portion. In a case where this fixed side elastic portion is provided, in a state in which the intermediate portion is elastically deformed and the specific elastic portion abuts on the movable housing, the fixed side elastic portion is included in the portion from the abutment position to the outer side in the connector width direction. Therefore, when the specific elastic portion abuts on the movable housing, even in a where the spring length of the intermediate portion is shortened, sufficient floating amount can be ensured because the fixed side elastic portion can be elastically deformable.

(24) In the circuit board electrical connector, the terminals may further include an arm portion positioned between the intermediate portion and the fixed side held portion, and the arm portion may extend along the connector width direction to be continuous with the intermediate portion, and elastically deformable in the connector height direction. In this configuration, the terminals are provided with the arm portion elastically deformable in the connector height direction. As a result, it is possible to improve the floating function in the connector height direction.

(25) According the above aspect of the present disclosure, it is possible provide a circuit board electrical connector that can favorably suppress the occurrence of resonance in the terminal.

(26) Hereinafter, an embodiment of the present disclosure will be described below based on the accompanying drawings.

First Embodiment

(27) FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a receptacle connector 1 and a plug connector 2 according to the present embodiment, illustrating a state before mating connection of both connectors. The receptacle connector 1 is a circuit board electrical connector mounted on a mounting surface of a

circuit board (not illustrated). In addition, the plug connector **2** as a mating connection body (mating connector) of the receptacle connector **1** is a circuit board electrical connector mounted on a mounting surface of another circuit board (not illustrated). The receptacle connector **1** and the plug connector **2** are mated and connected in a posture in which the mounting surfaces of the circuit board are parallel to each other and in a connector height direction (vertical direction illustrated as the Z-axis direction) perpendicular to the mounting surfaces. Thus, the electrical connector assembly is constituted. In the present embodiment, the plug connector **2** is mated and connected to the receptacle connector **1** from above.

(28) The receptacle connector **1** includes a plurality of metal plate receptacle terminals **10**, a receptacle housing **20** made of an electrical insulating material (for example, made of resin), and a metal receptacle fixing bracket **50**. The plurality of receptacle terminals **10** is arranged with one direction (Y-axis direction) parallel to the mounting surface of the circuit board as the terminal arrangement direction. The receptacle housing **20** holds the plurality of receptacle terminals **10**. The receptacle fixing brackets **50** are held at both end portions of the receptacle housing **20** in the terminal arrangement direction.

(29) FIG. **2** is a cross-sectional view illustrating a cross section of the receptacle connector **1** and the plug connector **2** before the mating connection taken along a plane perpendicular to the terminal arrangement direction, illustrating a cross section at a position of the receptacle terminal **10**. The receptacle terminals **10** are arranged in two rows. The two rows of receptacle terminals **10** face each other in a direction symmetrical in the connector width direction (X-axis direction) perpendicular to both the terminal arrangement direction (Y-axis direction) and the vertical direction (Z-axis direction). As illustrated in FIG. **2**, the receptacle housing **20** includes a fixed housing **30** fixed to a circuit board (not illustrated) via the receptacle terminal **10** and a movable housing **40** relatively movable with respect to the fixed housing **30**. The receptacle terminals **10** are provided to be bridged between the fixed housing **30** and the movable housing **40**.

(30) FIG. **3** is a perspective view illustrating two receptacle terminals **10** facing each other in the connector width direction. As illustrated in FIGS. **2** and **3**, the receptacle terminal **10** is a female terminal made by punching a metal plate member in the wall thickness direction while maintaining its flat surface. The receptacle terminal **10** includes a fixed side held portion **11** held by the fixed housing **30**, a movable side held portion **12** held by the movable housing **40**, an intermediate portion **13**, a lateral arm portion **14** (arm portion), a connecting portion **15**, an outer contact arm portion **16**, and an inner contact arm portion **17**. The intermediate portion **13** is positioned between the fixed side held portion **11** and the movable side held portion **12** and is elastically deformable. The lateral arm portion **14** (arm portion) is positioned between the fixed side held portion **11** and the intermediate portion **13** and is elastically deformable. The connecting portion **15** extends from the fixed side held portion **11** and is solder-connected to the circuit board. The outer contact arm portion **16** and the inner contact arm portion **17** extend from the movable side held portion **12** and come into contact with the plug connector **2**.

(31) Prior to further description of the receptacle terminal **10**, configurations of the fixed housing **30** and the movable housing **40** will be described based on FIGS. **1** and **2**. As illustrated in FIG. **1**, the fixed housing **30** includes a pair of side walls **31** extending in the terminal arrangement direction (Y-axis direction), and a pair of end walls **32** extending in the connector width direction (X-axis direction) and coupling the end portions of the pair of side walls **31**. The fixed housing **30** forms peripheral walls with the pair of side walls **31** and the pair of end walls **32**. The space surrounded by the peripheral wall and penetrating the vertical direction forms a central space **33** that accommodates a part of the movable housing **40** from below (see also FIG. **2**).

(32) As illustrated in FIG. **1**, in the side wall **31**, a side wall central portion **31A** that is positioned in the central region in the terminal arrangement direction is formed to protrude upward than a side wall end portion **31B** positioned in both end regions. This side wall central portion **31A** arranges and holds the receptacle terminals **10**. As illustrated in FIG. **2**, the side wall central portion **31A** is

provided to overlap the entire intermediate portion **13** of the receptacle terminal **10** in the vertical direction. A lower portion of the side wall central portion **31A** forms a terminal holding portion **31A-1** for holding the receptacle terminal **10**. Specifically, a terminal holding hole portion **31A-1A** extending in the vertical direction is formed penetrating through the terminal holding portion **31A-1**. The terminal holding portion **31A-1** is configured to hold a held arm portion **11B**, which will be described later, of the receptacle terminal **10** press-fit from below by the terminal holding hole portion **31A-1A**.

(33) In addition, as illustrated in FIG. 2, the side wall central portion **31A** is formed in a manner that a fixed side accommodating portion **31A-2** for accommodating a part of the intermediate portion **13** of the receptacle terminal **10** is recessed from the inner surface of the side wall central portion **31A** (a surface perpendicular to the connector width direction) and extends over the entire region of the side wall central portion **31A** in the terminal arrangement direction. The fixed side accommodating portion **31A-2** extends in the vertical direction within a range from the position near the upper end of the side wall **31** to the lower end in the vertical direction. In addition, a top wall **31A-3** is formed on the upper portion of the side wall central portion **31A**. The top wall **31A-3** projects inward in the connector width direction from the inner wall surface of the side wall central portion **31A** and closes the upper end of the fixed side accommodating portion **31A-2**. In other words, the inner surface of the side wall central portion **31A** (the surface perpendicular to the connector width direction) forms the side inner wall surface of the fixed side accommodating portion **31A-2**. Furthermore, the lower surface of the top wall **31A-3** (the surface perpendicular to the vertical direction) forms the upper inner wall surface of the fixed side accommodating portion **31A-2**. Note that the lower end of the fixed side accommodating portion **31A-2** is opened.

(34) As illustrated in FIG. 2, the top wall **31A-3** is provided to have a range that overlaps with a part of the intermediate portion **13** of the receptacle terminal **10** in the connector width direction. Specifically, the top wall **31A-3** has a range that overlaps with the entire portion of a first elastic portion **13A**, a part of a second elastic portion **13B** (an outer portion in the connector width direction), and a part of a third elastic portion **13C** (an outer portion in the connector width direction), and the entire portion of a fixed side inclined portion **13E**, which will be described later.

(35) As illustrated in FIG. 1, in the side wall end portion **31B**, a restriction concave portion **31B-1** that restricts the upward movement of the movable housing **40** is formed to be recessed from the lower surface of the side wall end portion **31B** and penetrate in the connector width direction (wall thickness direction of side wall end portion **31B**). As illustrated in FIG. 1, the restriction concave portion **31B-1** accommodates a restricted portion **44** of the movable housing **40**, which will be described later, from below. The restricting concave portion **31B-1** restricts the upward movement of the restricted portion **44** by positioning its upper inner wall surface to be able to abut on the upper surface of the restricted portion **44**.

(36) In the end wall **32**, as illustrated in FIG. 1, an end groove portion **32A** is formed in a slit shape extending perpendicularly to the terminal arrangement direction. This end groove portion **32A** accommodates and press-fits and holds a part of the receptacle fixing bracket **50**.

(37) The movable housing **40** disposed by being inserted into the central space **33** of the fixed housing **30** from below. As can be seen in FIG. 1, the majority of the movable housing **40**, excluding the upper half portion and the restricted portion **44**, which will be described later, is accommodated in the central space **33** (see also FIG. 2). The movable housing **40** includes a pair of long walls **41** extending in the terminal arrangement direction, a pair of short walls **42**, a bottom wall **43** (see FIG. 2), and the restricted portion **44**. The pair of short walls **42** extends in the connector width direction and couples the end portions of the pair of long walls **41**. The bottom wall **43** closes the space surrounded by the peripheral walls including the pair of long walls **41** and the pair of short walls **42** from below. The restricted portion **44** extends outward in the connector width direction from the lower portion of the short wall **42**. The space surrounded by the peripheral wall and opened upward forms a receiving portion **45** for receiving a part of the plug connector **2**.

(38) As illustrated in FIG. 2, the portion accommodated in the central space 33 in the movable housing 40 includes a part of the intermediate portion 13 of the receptacle terminal 10 in the vertical direction, specifically, a range overlapping with the entire portion of the third elastic portion 13C, which will be described later.

(39) In the long wall 41, as illustrated in FIG. 2, a movable side accommodating portion 41A recessed from the inner wall surface over the entire region in the vertical direction is arranged and formed. The movable side accommodating portion 41A accommodates the outer contact arm portion 16 and the inner contact arm portion 17 of the receptacle terminal 10.

(40) As illustrated in FIG. 2, the bottom wall 43 is positioned in the space of the upper half portion of the central space 33 of the fixed housing 30. In the bottom wall 43, a bottom groove portion 43A for accommodating and press-fitting and holding the movable side held portion 12 of the receptacle terminal 10 from below is arranged and formed in the terminal arrangement direction. As illustrated in FIG. 2, the bottom groove portion 43A has a slit shape extending perpendicularly to the terminal arrangement direction. The bottom groove portion 43A penetrates the bottom wall 43 in the vertical direction and communicates with the movable housing portion 41A.

(41) The restricted portion 44 extends outward in the connector width direction from the outer surface of the lower portion of the short wall 42 (the surface perpendicular to the connector width direction). The distal end portion of the restricted portion 44 is accommodated in the restriction concave portion 31B-1 of the fixed housing 30, and positioned to have a gap in the vertical direction and the terminal arrangement direction with respect to the inner wall surface of the restriction concave portion 31B-1. Therefore, the restricted portion 44 and the movable housing 40 are movable in the vertical direction and the terminal arrangement direction within the range of the gap, and the restricted portion 44 abuts on the inner wall surface of the restriction concave portion 31B-1. Thus, further movement is restricted.

(42) Description will go back to the receptacle terminal 10. As illustrated in FIGS. 2 and 3, the fixed side held portion 11 of the receptacle terminal 10 includes a base portion 11A positioned in the lower portion of the fixed housing 30, the held arm portion 11B extending upward from the base portion 11A, and an extended portion 11C extending inwardly in the connector width direction from the base portion 11A. The held arm portion 11B extends in a straight shape within the terminal holding hole portion 31A-1A of the fixed housing 30 from the position of the base portion 11A that is closer to the outer side in the connector width direction. As illustrated in FIG. 3, the held arm portion 11B includes a plurality of press-fit protrusions 11B-1 on the inner edge (the edge extending in the vertical direction) in the connector width direction. The held arm portion 11B is press-fit and held in the terminal holding hole portion 31A-1A by the press-fit protrusions 11B-1. The extending portion 11C extends in a straight shape from the base portion 11A inward in the connector width direction. As illustrated in FIG. 2, the extending portion 11C is positioned to have a gap between it and the mounting surface (upper surface) of the circuit board (not illustrated) in the vertical direction.

(43) As illustrated in FIGS. 2 and 3, the lateral arm portion 14 extends along the upper edge of the fixed side held portion 11 from the distal end portion of the extended portion 11C (the inner side end portion in the connector width direction) and extends straight outward in the connector width direction. The lateral arm portion 14 is positioned directly below the intermediate portion 13. The lateral arm portion 14 is positioned to have a gap between it and the fixed side held portion 11 in the vertical direction. The lateral arm portion 14 is elastically deformable in the vertical direction within the range of the gap, with its base end portion, that is, the portion coupled to the distal end portion of the extended portion 11C as a fulcrum.

(44) Thus, by providing the receptacle terminal 10 in the lateral arm portion 14 elastically deformable in the vertical direction, the floating function in the vertical direction can be improved. The lateral arm portion 14 extends in the connector width direction. Therefore, increase in size of the receptacle terminal 10 and thus the receptacle connector 1 in the vertical direction by providing

the lateral arm portion **14** is minimized. In addition the lateral arm portion **14** is positioned within the range of the intermediate portion **13** in the connector width direction. As a result, an increase in the size of the receptacle terminal **10** and thus the receptacle connector **1** in the connector width direction is avoided. It should be noted that providing the lateral arm portion **14** is not necessary in a case where a sufficiently large amount of elastic deformation in the vertical direction can be ensured in the intermediate portion **13**.

(45) The connecting portion **15** extends in the connector width direction continuously to the lower portion of the base portion **11A** of the fixed side held portion **11**. As illustrated in FIG. 2, the distal end of the connecting portion **15** extends outside the fixed housing **30**. The connecting portion **15** is solder-connected to the corresponding circuit portion on the mounting surface of the circuit board at its lower end.

(46) The movable side held portion **12** is held by the bottom wall **43** of the movable housing **40**, as illustrated in FIG. 2. As illustrated in FIG. 3, the movable side held portion **12** includes a plurality of press-fit protrusions **12A** on the inner edge (the edge extending in the vertical direction) in the connector width direction. The movable side held portion **12** is press-fit and held from below in the bottom groove portion **43A** of the bottom wall **43** by the press-fit protrusions **12A**.

(47) As illustrated in FIG. 2, the outer contact arm portion **16** extends straight upward from the position of the movable side held portion **12** that is closer to the outer side in the connector width direction into the movable side accommodating portion **41A** of the movable housing **40**. At the upper end portion of the outer contact arm portion **16**, as illustrated in FIGS. 2 and 3, an upper contact portion **16A** for contacting a plug terminal **60** (see FIG. 2) of the plug connector **2** is provided. It is formed to protrude toward the inner side in the connector width direction. As illustrated in FIG. 2, the inner contact arm portion **17** is positioned on the inner side than the outer contact arm portion **16** in the connector width direction. The inner contact arm portion **17** extends straight upward from the movable side held portion **12** in the movable side accommodating portion **41A** of the movable housing **40**. The inner contact arm portion **17** is shorter than the outer contact arm portion **16**, as illustrated in FIGS. 2 and 3. The upper end portion of the inner contact arm portion **17** is positioned directly below the upper contact portion **16A** of the outer contact arm portion **16**. At the upper end portion of the inner contact arm portion **17**, the lower contact portion **17A** for contact with the plug terminal **60** of the plug connector **2** is formed to protrude inward in the connector width direction.

(48) Hereinafter, in a case where the outer contact arm portion **16** and the inner contact arm portion **17** need not be distinguished specifically, they are collectively referred to as “contact arm portions **16** and **17**”. In addition, in a case where the upper contact portion **16A** and the lower contact portion **17A** need not be distinguished specifically, they are collectively referred to as “contact portions **16A** and **17A**”.

(49) As illustrated in FIG. 2, when the contact arm portions **16** and **17** are in the free state, the protruding ends of the contact portions **16A** and **17A** protrude from the movable side accommodating portion **41A** and are positioned within the receiving portion **45**. Then, when the plug connector **2** is mated and connected to the receptacle connector **1**, the protruding ends of the contact portions **16A** and **17A** receive the pressing force from the plug terminal **60**. As a result, the contact arm portions **16** and **17** are elastically deformed outward in the connector width direction.

(50) As illustrated in FIGS. 2 and 3, the intermediate portion **13** includes four elastic portions that are positioned between the lateral arm portion **14** and the movable side held portion **12** and reversed by repeating the bending direction in the vertical direction (Z-axis direction). As a result, the intermediate portion **13** is elastically deformable in the connector width direction, the terminal arrangement direction, and the vertical direction. Specifically, the intermediate portion **13** has the first elastic portion **13A**, the second elastic portion **13B** (fixed side elastic portion), and the third elastic portion **13C** (specific elastic portion), and a fourth elastic portion **13D** (movable side elastic portion) from the lateral arm portion **14** side toward the movable side held portion **12** side in this

order. In addition, as illustrated in FIGS. 2 and 3, the third elastic portion **13C** is coupled to the second elastic portion **13B** via the fixed side inclined portion **13E**, and is coupled to the fourth elastic portion **13D** via a movable side inclined portion **13F**.

(51) As illustrated in FIG. 3, the first elastic portion **13A** has an inverted J shape as a whole. The first elastic portion **13A** includes a first straight portion **13A-1** that is extending straight upward from the end portion of the lateral arm portion **14** (the outer end portion in the connector width direction) and a first bent portion **13A-2** that is bent inward and downward in the connector width direction from the upper end of the straight portion **13A-1**. The first elastic portion **13A** is elastically deformable in the connector width direction with the lower end portion of the first straight portion **13A-1** as a fulcrum.

(52) As illustrated in FIG. 2, the first elastic portion **13A** is provided below the bottom surface of the bottom wall **43** of the movable housing. The first elastic portion **13A** is accommodated in the fixed side accommodating portion **31A-2** of the fixed housing **30**. In addition, the first elastic portion **13A** is positioned to have a gap in the connector width direction between the first elastic portion **13A** and the side inner wall surface (the wall surface perpendicular to the connector width direction) of the fixed side accommodating portion **31A-2**. The first elastic portion **13A** can be elastically deformed outward in the connector width direction within the range of this gap.

(53) As illustrated in FIG. 3, the second elastic portion **13B** has a U shape as a whole. The second elastic portion **13B** includes two second straight portions **13B-1** extending in the vertical direction and a second bent portion **13B-2** having an upwardly bent shape coupling lower end portions of the second straight portions **13B-1**. The second elastic portion **13B** is elastically deformable in the connector width direction when the interval between the two second straight portions **13B-1** is narrowed or widened.

(54) The second elastic portion **13B** is provided on the inner side than the first elastic portion **13A** in the connector width direction and positioned in substantially the same range as the first elastic portion **13A** in the vertical direction. Therefore, the second elastic portion **13B** forms a horizontal S shape together with the first elastic portion **13A**. In addition, as illustrated in FIG. 2, the second straight portion **13B-1** positioned on the outer side in the connector width direction of the two second straight portions **13B-1** and a portion of the second bent portion **13B-2** positioned on the outer side in the connector width direction is accommodated in the fixed side accommodation portion **31A-2**.

(55) As illustrated in FIG. 3, the third elastic portion **13C** has an inverted U shape as a whole. The third elastic portion **13C** includes two third straight portions **13C-1** extending in the vertical direction and a third bent portion **13C-2** having a downwardly bent shape coupling upper end portions of the third straight portions **13C-1**. As illustrated in FIGS. 2 and 3, the two third straight portions **13C-1** extend to be slightly inclined in a direction away from each other as they go downward. The third elastic portion **13C** is elastically deformable in the connector width direction when the interval between the two third straight portions **13C-1** is narrowed or widened.

(56) As illustrated in FIGS. 2, the third elastic portion **13C** is provided above the first elastic portion **13A**, the second elastic portion **13B**, and the fourth elastic portion **13D** of the intermediate portion **13**. Therefore, the third elastic portion **13C** is positioned to be different in the vertical direction (connector height direction) with respect to the first elastic portion **13A**, the second elastic portion **13B**, and the fourth elastic portion **13D** of the intermediate portion **13**. That is, the third elastic portion **13C** is disposed at a position different in the vertical direction from those of the first elastic portion **13A**, the second elastic portion **13B**, and the fourth elastic portion **13D** of the intermediate portion **13**.

(57) The third elastic portion **13C** is positioned to have a range that overlaps with the movable side held portion **12** in the vertical direction. Thus, by providing the third elastic portion **13C** at a position overlapping with the movable side held portion **12**, an increase in size of the receptacle connector **1** in the vertical direction is avoided. A portion of the third elastic portion **13C**,

specifically, the third straight portion **13C-1** positioned on the outer side in the connector width direction of the two third straight portions **13C-1**, and a portion of the third bent portion **13C-2** positioned on the outer side in the connector width direction is accommodated in the fixed side accommodating portion **31A-2** as illustrated in FIG. 2.

(58) As illustrated in FIG. 2, the third elastic portion **13C** is positioned to have a gap **P1** in the connector width direction between the third elastic portion **13C** and the side inner wall surface of the fixed side accommodating portion **31A-2**, that is, the inner side surface of the side wall central portion **31A**. The third elastic portion **13C** can be elastically deformed outward in the connector width direction within the range of the gap **P1**. In addition, as illustrated in FIG. 2, the third elastic portion **13C** is positioned to have a gap **P2** between the third elastic portion **13C** and the outer wall surface of the movable housing **40**, that is, the side wall surface of the bottom wall **43** (the surface perpendicular to the connector width direction). The third elastic portion **13C** can be elastically deformed inward in the connector width direction within the range of this gap **P2**. In addition, as illustrated in FIG. 2, the third elastic portion **13C** is positioned to have a gap **P3** in the connector width direction between the third elastic portion **13C** and the upper inner wall surface of the fixed side accommodating portion **31A-2**, that is, the lower surface of the top wall **31A-3**. The third elastic portion **13C** can be elastically deformed upward, that is, in a direction away from the circuit board (not illustrated) within the range of this gap **P3**.

(59) As illustrated in FIG. 3, the fourth elastic portion **13D** has a U shape as a whole. The fourth elastic portion **13D** includes fourth second straight portions **13D-1** extending in the vertical direction and a fourth bent portion **13D-2** having an upwardly bent shape coupling lower end portions of the fourth straight portions **13D-1**. The fourth elastic portion **13D** is elastically deformable in the connector width direction when the interval between the two fourth straight portions **13D-1** is narrowed or widened.

(60) The fourth elastic portion **13D** is positioned on the inner side of the first elastic portion **13A**, the second elastic portion **13B**, and the third elastic portion **13C** in the connector width direction, and is provided in substantially the same range as the first elastic portion **13A** and the second elastic portion **13B** in the vertical direction. In addition, as illustrated in FIG. 2, the fourth elastic portion **13D** is positioned directly below the bottom wall **43** of the movable housing **40** in the vertical direction, and within the range of the wall thickness of the long walls **41** of the movable housing **40** in the connector width direction. In the fourth elastic portion **13D**, as illustrated in FIGS. 2 and 3, the fourth straight portion **13D-1** positioned on the inner side in the connector width direction of the two fourth straight portions **13D-1**, and the portion of the fourth bent portion **13D-2** that is positioned on the inner side in the connector width direction is positioned directly below the movable side held portion **12** in the vertical direction and positioned within the range of the movable side held portion **12** in the connector width direction.

(61) Thus, in the present embodiment, the fourth elastic portion **13D** is positioned to have a range that overlaps with the movable side held portion **12** in the connector width direction. As a result, it is possible to ensure a sufficient spring length of the intermediate portion **13** while avoiding an increase in the size of the receptacle connector **1** in the connector width direction. In the present embodiment, in the connector width direction, as the movable side elastic portion having a range that overlaps with the movable side held portion **12** on the inner side than the third elastic portion **13C**, only one elastic portion that is, the fourth elastic portion **13D** is provided. In this regard, two or more movable side elastic portions may be provided.

(62) As illustrated in FIGS. 2 and 3, the fixed side inclined portion **13E** and the movable side inclined portion **13F** extend straight to be inclined outward in the connector width direction as they go upward. As described above, the third elastic portion **13C** is coupled to the second elastic portion **13B** via the fixed side inclined portion **13E**, and is coupled to the fourth elastic portion **13D** via the movable side inclined portion **13F**. As a result, the third elastic portion **13C** is positioned to have a range that overlaps with the first elastic portion **13A** and the second elastic portion **13B** in

the connector width direction. As a result, the third elastic portion **13C** is disposed at a position that overlaps with at least a part of another elastic portion (first elastic portion **13A** and second elastic portion **13B**) in the connector width direction. Specifically, the portion of the third elastic portion **13C** from the third straight portion **13C-1** to the third bent portion **13C-2**, positioned on the outer side in the connector width direction, is positioned overlapping with the portion of the first elastic portion **13A** from the first bent portion **13A-2** to the second elastic portion **13B** in the connector width direction.

(63) Thus, in the present embodiment, the third elastic portion **13C** is positioned to have a range that overlaps with the first elastic portion **13A** and the second elastic portion **13B** in the connector width direction. Therefore, even if a plurality of elastic portions is provided in the intermediate part **13** and the spring length of the intermediate part **13** is increased, compared with the case where all the elastic portions are positioned differently without overlapping as in the typical art, it is easier to avoid an increase in the size of the intermediate portion **13** of the receptacle terminal **10** in the connector width direction and thus an increase in the size of the receptacle connector **1**.

(64) In addition, in the present embodiment, the fixed side inclined portion **13E** and the movable side inclined portion **13F** that are inclined on the same side as in the connector width direction (outer side in the present embodiment) are provided between the third elastic portion **13C**, and the second elastic portion **13B** and the fourth elastic portion **13D**. As a result, the third elastic portion **13C** can be positioned on the outer side in the connector width direction without being largely inclined. Thus, stress generated in the third elastic portion **13C** can be dispersed favorably when the third elastic portion **13C** is elastically deformed in the connector width direction.

(65) The receptacle fixing bracket **50** is made by bending a metal plate member in a plate thickness direction. The receptacle fixing bracket **50** is bent at the lower edge of the held plate portion (not illustrated) held by the end walls **32** of the fixed housing **30** and the both end portions of the held plate portion in the connector width direction, and includes a fixed portion **51** (see FIG. 1) extending outward in the terminal arrangement direction. The receptacle fixing bracket **50** is held by press-fitting the held plate portion into the end groove portion **32A** of the end wall **32** from below, and is solder-connected to the mounting surface of the circuit board on the lower surface of the fixed portion **51**.

(66) Next, the configuration of the plug connector **2** will be described based on FIGS. 1 and 2. The plug connector **2** includes a plurality of metal plate plug terminals **60**, a plug housing **70** made of an electrical insulating material (for example, made of resin), and a metal plug fixing bracket **80**. The plug terminals **60** is arranged with one direction (Y-axis direction of FIGS. 1 and 2) parallel to the mounting surface of the circuit board as the terminal arrangement direction. The plug housing **70** includes a plurality of plug terminals **60**. The plug fixing brackets **80** are held at both end portions of the plug housing **70** in the terminal arrangement direction. As seen in FIGS. 1 and 2, the plug terminals **60** are arranged in two rows. The two rows of plug terminals **60** face each other in such a direction as to be symmetrical in the connector width direction.

(67) As illustrated in FIGS. 1 and 2, the plug housing **70** includes a pair of side walls **71** extending in the terminal arrangement direction (Y-axis direction), a pair of end walls **72**, a bottom wall **73**, and a central wall **74**. The pair of end walls **72** extends in the connector width direction (X-axis direction) and couples the end portions of the pair of side walls **71**. The bottom wall **73** closes the upper end of the peripheral wall formed by the pair of side walls **71** and the pair of end walls **72**. The central wall **74** rises from the bottom wall **73** within the peripheral wall. As illustrated in FIG. 2, the annular space surrounded by the peripheral wall and the central wall **74** and opened downward includes a receiving portion **75** formed for receiving the peripheral wall of the movable housing **40** of the receptacle connector **1** from below. In the end wall **72**, as illustrated in FIG. 1, an end groove portion **72A** is formed in a slit shape extending perpendicularly to the terminal arrangement direction. This end groove portion **72A** accommodates and press-fits and holds a part of the plug fixing bracket **80**.

(68) The plug terminal **60** is a male terminal made by bending a metal strip in the wall thickness direction. As illustrated in FIG. 2, the plug terminal **60** includes a connecting portion **61** formed at one end side, a contact arm portion **62** formed at the other end side, and a held portion **63** coupling the connecting portion **61** and the contact arm portion **62**. The connecting portion **61** extends in the connector width direction along the bottom surface of the bottom wall **73** of the plug housing **70** (top surface in FIGS. 1 and 2). The connecting portion **61** is solder-connected to the corresponding circuit portion on the mounting surface of the circuit board (not illustrated). As illustrated in FIG. 2, the contact arm portion **62** extends straight in the vertical direction along the side surface of the central wall **74**. The contact arm portion **62** has a plate surface exposed to the receiving portion **75**. The contact arm portion **62** can contact the contact portions **16A** and **17A** of the receptacle terminal **10** by this plate surface. As illustrated in FIG. 2, the held portion **63** has an inverted L shape. The held portion **63** is held by integral molding (insert molding) on the bottom wall **43** of the plug housing **70** by the vertically extending portion.

(69) The plug fixing bracket **80** is made by bending a metal plate member in a plate thickness direction. The plug fixing bracket **80** includes a held plate portion (not illustrated) held by the end walls **72** of the plug housing **70** and includes a fixed portion **81** (see FIG. 1) extending outward in the direction. The fixed portion **81** is bent at the upper edge of the both end portions of the held plate portion in the connector width direction and extends outward in the terminal arrangement direction. As illustrated in FIG. 1, the plug fixing bracket **80** is held by press-fitting the held plate portion into the end groove portion **72A** of the end wall **72** from above. Furthermore, the plug fixing bracket **80** is solder-connected to the mounting surface of the circuit board on the upper surface of the fixed portion **81**.

(70) Next, the mating connection operation between the receptacle connector **1** and the plug connector **2** will be described with reference to FIGS. 1, 2 and 4. Here, FIG. 4 is a cross-sectional view illustrating a cross section of the receptacle connector **1** and the plug connector **2** in a mating connection state taken along a plane perpendicular to the terminal arrangement direction, illustrating a cross section at a position of the receptacle terminal **10**.

(71) First, the receptacle connector **1** and the plug connector **2** are mounted on the corresponding mounting surfaces of a circuit board (not illustrated) by solder connection. That is, the receptacle connector **1** is attached to the circuit board by solder-connecting the connecting portion **15** of the receptacle terminal **10** and the fixed portion **51** of the receptacle fixing bracket **50** by solder-connecting to the mounting surface. The plug connector **2** is attached to the circuit board by solder-connecting the connecting portion **61** of the plug terminal **60** and the fixed portion **81** of the plug fixing bracket **80** by solder-connecting to the mounting surface.

(72) Next, as seen in FIGS. 1 and 2, the plug connector **2** is positioned above the receptacle connector **1** in the posture with the receiving portion **75** (see FIG. 2) facing downward. After that, by lowering the plug connector **2** in the same posture, the central wall **74** is caused to enter the receiving portion **45** of the movable housing **40** of the receptacle connector **1** from above. At the same time, the peripheral wall of the movable housing **40** enters the receiving portion **75** of the plug connector **2** from below. Thus, as illustrated in FIG. 4, the receptacle connector **1** and the plug connector **2** are mated together.

(73) When the plug connector **2** is mated with the receptacle connector **1**, as illustrated in FIG. 4, the contact arm portions **62** of the plug terminals **60** positioned on both side surfaces of the central wall **74** of the plug connector **2** is made to abut on the contact portions **16A** and **17A** of the pair of receptacle terminals **10** to elastically deform these contact arm portions **16** and **17** to push them outward in the connector width direction. Thus, the contact arm portion **62** of the plug terminal **60** and the contact portions **16A** and **17A** of the receptacle terminal **10** are brought into contact with each other with contact pressure and are electrically connected. In this way, the mating connection operation between the receptacle connector **1** and the plug connector **2** is completed. Note that in FIG. 4, the contact arm portions **16** and **17** of the receptacle terminal **10** are at the same positions as

in FIG. 2, and the contact arm portions **16A** and **17A** and the contact arm portion **62** are illustrated in the overlapped state. In this regard, actually, the contact arm portions **16** and **17** of the receptacle terminal **10** are elastically deformed outward in the connector width direction by this overlapped portion.

(74) In a case where there is no deviation in the relative positions of the receptacle connector **1** and the plug connector **2** at the time when the mating connection operation is completed, the receptacle connector **1** and the plug connector **2** are in the normal positions illustrated in FIG. 4. In this normal position, the third elastic portion **13C** of the receptacle terminal **10** is positioned to have the gap **P1** in the connector width direction with respect to the side inner wall surface of the fixed side accommodating portion **31A-2** of the fixed housing **30**, the gap **P2** in the connector width direction with respect to the outer wall surface of the movable housing **40**, and the gap **P3** in the vertical direction with respect to the upper inner wall surface of the fixed side accommodating portion **31A-2** of the fixed housing **30**.

(75) In a case where there is deviation in the relative positions of the receptacle connector **1** and the plug connector **2** just before the connector mating is started, during the connector mating process and after the connector mating, the receptacle terminal **10** is elastically deformed in the direction in which deviation occurs and the movable housing **40** relatively moves (floats) with respect to the fixed housing **30**. As a result, mating connection in a state in which deviation is absorbed is possible (see FIG. 7).

(76) In addition, even in a case where the receptacle connector **1** and the plug connector **2** are in their normal positions (see FIG. 4) at the time when the mating connection operation is completed, after that, for example, when the connector is used in an environment where vibration occurs, the vibration is absorbed by the floating of the movable housing **40** of the receptacle connector **1**.

(77) FIG. 5 is a cross-sectional view illustrating the receptacle connector **1** together with the plug connector **2** in a state in which the movable housing **40** floats in the connector width direction due to vibration generated during use of the connector after the connector has been mated and connected. FIG. 5 illustrates a cross section at the position of the receptacle terminal **10**, taken along a plane perpendicular to the terminal arrangement direction. In addition, FIG. 5 illustrates a state in which the movable housing **40** of the receptacle connector **1** floats toward the X1 side in the connector width direction (X-axis direction). In a case where the movable housing **40** floats to the X1 side, each of elastic portions **13A** to **13D** of the two receptacle terminals **10** illustrated in FIG. 5, that is, both receptacle terminals **10** positioned on the X1 side and the X2 side elastically deform toward the X1 side. That is, in the intermediate portion **13** of the receptacle terminal **10** on the X1 side, each of straight portions **13A-1** to **13D-1** are deformed to narrow the interval between. On the other hand, in the intermediate portion **13** of the receptacle terminal **10** on the X2 side, each of the straight portions **13A-1** to **13D-1** are deformed to widen the interval between.

(78) As illustrated in FIG. 5, the third elastic portion **13C** of the receptacle terminal **10** positioned on the X1 side is elastically deformed in a manner that the entire third elastic portion **13C** falls outward in the connector width direction the interval between the two third straight portions **13C-1** is narrowed. Such elastic deformation of the third elastic portion **13C** is allowed with the gap **P1** as a limit (see FIG. 4). At this time, when the frequency of vibration generated in the usage environment of the connector approaches the natural frequency of the receptacle terminal **10**, the amount of deformation of the intermediate portion **13** of the receptacle terminal **10** increases. In the present embodiment, when the third elastic portion **13C** is elastically deformed with the deformation amount of the above gap **P1** outward in the connector width direction, as illustrated in FIG. 5, the upper portion of the third straight portions **13C-1** on the outer side (X1side) in the connector width direction abuts on the side inner wall surface of the fixed side accommodating portion **31A-2**. Therefore, further deformation of the third elastic portion **13C** is restricted. Therefore, since the intermediate portion **13** is not excessively deformed, damage to the receptacle terminal **10** due to plastic deformation and the like is suppressed favorably.

(79) In the state in which the third elastic portion **13C** abuts on the side inner wall surface of the fixed side accommodating portion **31A-2**, the intermediate portion **13** of the receptacle terminal **10** is elastically deformable not in the entire portion but from the abutment position to a portion positioned on the inner side in the connector width direction, that is, a portion including only the third bent portion **13C-2** of the third elastic portion **13C**, the third straight portion **13C-1** on the inner side (X2 side), the movable side inclined portion **13F**, and the fourth elastic portion **13D**. Therefore, in the state in which the third elastic portion **13C** abuts on the side inner wall surface of the fixed housing portion **31A-2**, the spring length of the intermediate portion **13** is shorter than in the state in which the third elastic portion **13C** does not abut on the side inner wall surface of the fixed side accommodating portion **31A-2**. As a result, the natural frequency of receptacle terminal **10** increases. In other words, when the third elastic portion **13C** abuts on the side inner wall surface of the fixed side accommodating portion **31A-2**, difference in the frequency of vibration occurring in the usage environment of the connector and the natural frequency of the receptacle terminal **10** becomes large. Therefore, resonance is less likely to occur than before abutment.

(80) In addition, in the present embodiment, the intermediate portion **13** is provided with the fourth elastic portion **13D** and the movable side inclined portion **13F** positioned between the third elastic portion **13C** and the movable side held portion **12**. When the intermediate portion **13** is elastically deformed and the third elastic portion **13C** abuts on the side inner wall surface of the fixed side accommodating portion **31A-2**, the fourth elastic portion **13D** and the movable side inclined portion **13F** are included in the elastically deformable portion. Therefore, when the third elastic portion **13C** abuts on the above side inner wall surface, compared with the state before abutment, even in a case where the spring length of the intermediate portion **13** is shortened, sufficient floating amount can be ensured because the fourth elastic portion **13D** and the movable side inclined portion **13F** are elastically deformable.

(81) FIG. **6** is a cross-sectional view illustrating the receptacle connector **1** together with the plug connector **2** in a state in which the movable housing **40** floats upward due to vibration generated during use of the connector after the connector has been mated and connected. FIG. **6** illustrates a cross section at the position of the receptacle terminal **10**, taken along a plane perpendicular to the terminal arrangement direction.

(82) Upward elastic deformation of the third elastic portion **13C** of the receptacle terminals **10** on both the X1 side and the X2 side is allowed with the gap **P3** as a limit (see FIG. **4**). In the present embodiment, as illustrated in FIG. **6**, when the third elastic portion **13C** elastically deforms upward with the amount of deformation of the gap **P3**, the third bent portion **13C-2** abuts on the upper inner wall surface of the fixed side accommodating portion **31A-2**, that is, the lower surface of the top wall **31A-3**. Therefore, further deformation of the third elastic portion **13C** is restricted. Therefore, since the intermediate portion **13** is not excessively deformed, damage to the receptacle terminal **10** due to plastic deformation and the like is suppressed favorably.

(83) Thus, the fixed housing **30** includes the top wall **31A-3** that is positioned to have a range overlapping in the connector width direction at a position away from the circuit board in the connector height direction with respect to the third elastic portion **13C** of the intermediate portion **13**, and the third elastic portion **13C** can abut on the top wall **31A-3** when being elastically deformed by a predetermined deformation amount toward the side away from the circuit board in the connector height direction.

(84) In the state in which the third elastic portion **13C** abuts on the top wall **31A-3**, the intermediate portion **13** of the receptacle terminal **10** is elastically deformable not in the entire portion but from the abutment position to a portion positioned on the inner side in the connector width direction, that is, the third straight portion **13C-1** on the inner side (X2 side) of the third elastic portion **13C**, the movable side inclined portion **13F**, and the fourth elastic portion **13D**. Therefore, in the state in which the third elastic portion **13C** abuts on the top wall **31A-3**, the spring length of the intermediate portion **13** is shorter than in the state in which the third elastic portion **13C** does not

abut on the top wall **31A-3**. As a result, the natural frequency of receptacle terminal **10** increases. In other words, when the third elastic portion **13C** abuts on the top wall **31A-3**, difference in the frequency of vibration occurring in the usage environment of the connector and the natural frequency of the receptacle terminal **10** becomes large. Therefore, resonance is less likely to occur than before abutment.

(85) As described above, in a case where there is deviation in the relative positions of the receptacle connector **1** and the plug connector **2** just before the connector mating is started, deviation is absorbed because the movable housing **40** floats. FIG. 7 is a cross-sectional view illustrating the receptacle connector **1** together with the plug connector **2** in a state in which the movable housing **40** floats in the connector width direction at a time when the mating connection of a connector **1** is completed. FIG. 7 illustrates a cross section at the position of the receptacle terminal **10**, taken along a plane perpendicular to the terminal arrangement direction. In addition, FIG. 7 illustrates a state in which the movable housing **40** of the receptacle connector **1** floats toward the X1 side in the connector width direction (X-axis direction).

(86) As can be seen by comparing FIG. 7 and FIG. 5, the form of elastic deformation of the receptacle terminal **10** is different between the case where the movable housing **40** floats to absorb the deviation of the relative positions of the connectors in the connector mating process (see FIG. 7) and the case where the movable housing **40** floats by receiving vibration during the use of the connector (see FIG. 5).

(87) As illustrated in FIG. 7, in a case where the movable housing **40** floats toward the X1 side, each of the elastic portions **13A** to **13D** of the receptacle terminal **10** positioned on the X1 side is deformed to narrow the interval between each of the straight portions **13A-1** to **13D-1**. As a result, the third elastic portion **13C** is pushed by the outer wall surface on the X1 side of the movable housing **40** that has moved to the X1 side, and abuts on outer wall surface of the movable housing **40** at the upper portion of the third straight portion **13C-1** on the inner side (X2 side) in the connector width direction.

(88) On the other hand, at the receptacle terminal **10** positioned on the X2 side, the first elastic portion **13A**, the second elastic portion **13B**, and the third elastic portion **13C** are elastically deformed to fall on the inner side in the connector width direction. In addition, at the same time, the straight portions **13A-1** of the first elastic portion **13A** are deformed to narrow the interval between. Furthermore, the straight portions **13B-1** of the second elastic portion **13B** and the straight portions **13C-1** of the third elastic portion **13C** are deformed to widen the interval between. In addition, the fourth elastic portion **13D** is deformed to narrow the interval between the straight portions **13D-1**. When each of the elastic portions **13A** to **13D** is deformed, the third elastic portion **13C** abuts on the outer wall surface on the X2 side of the movable housing **40** at the upper portion of the third straight portion **13C-1** on the inner side (X1 side) of the connector width direction.

(89) The connectors **1** and **2** in a mated state illustrated in FIG. 7 are used in a state in which the third elastic portions **13C** of the receptacle terminals **10** on both sides in the connector width direction abut on the outer wall surfaces on both sides of the movable housing **40**. When the connectors **1** and **2** receive vibration while the connectors are in use, the receptacle terminal **10** is elastically deformed while maintaining the abutment state between the third elastic portion **13C** and the movable housing **40**. At this time, the intermediate portion **13** of the receptacle terminal **10** is elastically deformable not in the entire portion but from the abutment position to a portion positioned on the outer side in the connector width direction, that is, the third bent portion **13C-2** of the third elastic portion **13C**, the third straight portion **13C-1** on the outer side, the fixed side inclined portion **13E**, the second elastic portion **13B**, and the first elastic portion **13A**. Therefore, in the state in which the third elastic portion **13C** abuts on the outer wall surface of the movable housing **40**, the spring length of the intermediate portion **13** is shorter than in the state in which the third elastic portion **13C** does not abut on the outer wall surface. As a result, the natural frequency of receptacle terminal **10** increases. In other words, when the third elastic portion **13C** abuts on the

movable housing **40**, difference in the frequency of vibration occurring in the usage environment of the connector and the natural frequency of the receptacle terminal **10** becomes large. Therefore, resonance is less likely to occur compared with the case where there is no abutment.

(90) Thus, the movable housing **40** is positioned on the inner side in the connector width direction than the third elastic portion **13C** to have a range overlapping with the third elastic portion **13C** of the intermediate portion **113** in the connector height direction, and the third elastic portion **13C** can abut on the movable housing **40** when being elastically deformed by a predetermined deformation amount in the connector width direction.

Second Embodiment

(91) In the first embodiment, in the intermediate portion **13** of the receptacle terminal **10**, the elastic portion that can abut on the side walls **31** of the fixed housing **30** is positioned to be different in the vertical direction and overlap in the connector width direction with respect to the third elastic portion **13C**, that is, another elastic portion. The second embodiment is different from the first embodiment in the following point. That is, in the second embodiment, all the elastic portions provided in the intermediate portion are positioned at the same height in the vertical direction and provided without overlapping in the connector width direction. Furthermore, the elastic portion positioned on the outermost side in the connector width direction can abut on the side wall of the fixed housing.

(92) Next, the second embodiment will be described based on FIGS. **8** and **9**. FIG. **8** is a cross-sectional view illustrating a cross section of the receptacle connector according to the present embodiment taken along a plane perpendicular to the terminal arrangement direction, illustrating a cross section at a position of the receptacle terminal. As illustrated in FIG. **8**, the intermediate portion **113** of the receptacle terminal **110** in the present embodiment has a shape in which the third elastic portion **13C**, the fixed side inclined portion **13E**, and the movable side inclined portion **13F** are omitted from the intermediate portion **13** of the receptacle terminal **10** of the first embodiment, and has a shape in which the three elastic portions are continuous. Here, in order to facilitate comparison with the first embodiment, the three elastic portions provided in the intermediate portion **113** are referred to as “first elastic portion **113A**”, “second elastic portion **113B**”, and “fourth elastic portion **113D**” in the order from the outer side in the connector width direction.

(93) In FIG. **8**, the configuration corresponding to the first embodiment is illustrated by attaching a symbol in which “100” is added to the symbol in the first embodiment. In addition, since the configuration of a receptacle connector **101** in the present embodiment is the same as that in the first embodiment except for the intermediate portion **113** of the receptacle terminal **110**, the description will be omitted. In addition, since the configuration of a plug connector **102** in the present embodiment is the same as that in the first embodiment, the description will be omitted.

(94) As illustrated in FIG. **8**, the first elastic portion **113A**, the second elastic portion **113B**, and the fourth elastic portion **113D** of the intermediate portion **113** of the receptacle terminal **110** are positioned at the same height with respect to each other in the vertical direction and to be different without overlapping with each other in the connector width direction. As illustrated in FIG. **8**, when the intermediate portion **113** is not deformed and in a free state, a gap **Q** in the connector width direction is formed between the first elastic portion **113A** that is the specific elastic portion and the side inner wall surface of the fixed side accommodating portion **131A-2** of a fixed housing **130**.

(95) Thus, the intermediate portion **113** includes the plurality of elastic portions **113A** to **113D**, and the plurality of elastic portions **113A** to **113D** includes the fourth elastic portion **113D** as the movable side elastic portion that is the elastic portion positioned between the first elastic portion **113A** and a movable side held portion **112**.

(96) FIG. **9** is a cross-sectional view illustrating a cross section of the receptacle connector **101** in a floating state and the plug connector **102** mated and connected to the receptacle connector **101** taken along the plane perpendicular to the terminal arrangement direction, illustrating a cross section at a position of the receptacle terminal **110**. As illustrated in FIG. **9**, in a state in which the

receptacle connector **101** has floated and moved to the X1 side in the connector width direction, each of the first elastic portion **113A**, the second elastic portion **113B**, and the fourth elastic portion **113D** of the receptacle terminal **110** is elastically deformed toward the X1 side in the connector width direction. At this time, elastic deformation of the first elastic portion **113A** positioned on the X1 side is allowed with the gap Q as a limit (see FIG. 8). Therefore, when the first elastic portion **113A** is elastically deformed with the deformation amount of the above gap Q outward in the connector width direction, as illustrated in FIG. 9, the upper portion of a first straight portion **113A-1** on the outer side (X1 side) in the connector width direction abuts on the side inner wall surface of the fixed side accommodating portion **131A-2**. Therefore, further deformation of the first elastic portion **113A** is restricted.

(97) Thus, the fixed housing **130** includes a side wall **131** that is positioned on the outer side in the connector width direction than the third elastic portion **113A** to have a range overlapping with the first elastic portion **113A** of the intermediate portion **113** in the connector height direction, and the first elastic portion **113A** can abut on the side wall **131** when being elastically deformed by a predetermined deformation amount in the connector width direction.

(98) In the state in which the first elastic portion **113A** abuts on the above side inner wall surface, in the intermediate portion **113** of the receptacle terminal **110**, a portion from the abutment position to the portion positioned on the inner side in the connector width direction, that is, only a portion including a first bent portion **113A-2**, the second elastic portion **113B**, and the fourth elastic portion **113D** of the first elastic portion **113A** in the intermediate portion **113** can be elastically deformable. Therefore, as with the first embodiment, compared with the state before abutment, the spring length of the intermediate portion **113** is shorter. As a result, the natural frequency of receptacle terminal **110** increases and the resonance of the receptacle terminal **110** is less likely to occur.

(99) In the first embodiment and the second embodiment, the intermediate portion includes a plurality of elastic portions. In this regard, the number of elastic portions provided in the intermediate portion may be appropriately set, and may be one, for example. In a case where only one elastic portion is provided in the intermediate portion, this elastic portion may abut on the housing when being elastically deformed by a predetermined deformation amount.

(100) The foregoing detailed description has been presented for the purposes of illustration and description. Many modifications and variations are possible in light of the above teaching. It is not intended to be exhaustive or to limit the subject matter described herein to the precise form disclosed. Although the subject matter has been described in language specific to structural features and/or methodological acts, it is to be understood that the subject matter defined in the appended claims is not necessarily limited to the specific features or acts described above. Rather, the specific features and acts described above are disclosed as example forms of implementing the claims appended hereto.

Claims

1. A circuit board electrical connector comprising: a plurality of terminals; a fixed housing fixed to a circuit board via the terminals; and a movable housing relatively movable with respect to the fixed housing, wherein the terminals are provided to be bridged between the fixed housing and the movable housing, the terminals include a fixed side held portion held by the fixed housing, a movable side held portion positioned on an inner side in a connector width direction than the fixed side held portion and held by the movable housing, and an elastically deformable intermediate portion positioned between the fixed side held portion and the movable side held portion, the intermediate portion includes at least one of elastic portions bent in a connector height direction, the at least one of elastic portions includes a specific elastic portion configured to abut on the fixed housing when being elastically deformed by a predetermined deformation amount, the specific elastic portion has an inverted U shape as a whole, the specific elastic portion includes two straight

- portions extending in the connector height direction and a bent portion having a downwardly bent shape coupling upper end portions of the two straight portions, and the upper end portion of one of the two straight portions on an outer side in the connector width direction is configured to abut on the fixed housing when the specific elastic portion is elastically deformed by the predetermined deformation amount.
2. The circuit board electrical connector according to claim 1, wherein the fixed housing includes a side wall positioned on the outer side in the connector width direction than the specific elastic portion to have a range overlapping with the specific elastic portion of the intermediate portion in the connector height direction, and the elastic portion is configured to abut on the side wall when being elastically deformed by the predetermined deformation amount outward in the connector width direction.
 3. The circuit board electrical connector according to claim 1, wherein the intermediate portion includes a plurality of the elastic portions and the plurality of elastic portions includes a movable side elastic portion that is an elastic portion positioned between the specific elastic portion and the movable side held portion besides the specific elastic portion.
 4. The circuit board electrical connector according to claim 2, wherein the intermediate portion includes a plurality of the elastic portions and the plurality of elastic portions includes a movable side elastic portion that is an elastic portion positioned between the specific elastic portion and the movable side held portion besides the specific elastic portion.
 5. The circuit board electrical connector according to claim 1, wherein the fixed housing includes a top wall positioned to have a range overlapping in the connector width direction at a position on a side away from the circuit board in the connector height direction with respect to the specific elastic portion of the intermediate portion, and the specific elastic portion is configured to abut on the top wall when being elastically deformed by the predetermined deformation amount toward the side away from the circuit board in the connector height direction.
 6. The circuit board electrical connector according to claim 2, wherein the fixed housing includes a top wall positioned to have a range overlapping in the connector width direction at a position on a side away from the circuit board in the connector height direction with respect to the specific elastic portion of the intermediate portion, and the specific elastic portion is configured to abut on the top wall when being elastically deformed by the predetermined deformation amount toward the side away from the circuit board in the connector height direction.
 7. The circuit board electrical connector according to claim 3, wherein the fixed housing includes a top wall positioned to have a range overlapping in the connector width direction at a position on a side away from the circuit board in the connector height direction with respect to the specific elastic portion of the intermediate portion, and the specific elastic portion is configured to abut on the top wall when being elastically deformed by the predetermined deformation amount toward the side away from the circuit board in the connector height direction.
 8. The circuit board electrical connector according to claim 4, wherein the fixed housing includes a top wall positioned to have a range overlapping in the connector width direction at a position on a side away from the circuit board in the connector height direction with respect to the specific elastic portion of the intermediate portion, and the specific elastic portion is configured to abut on the top wall when being elastically deformed by the predetermined deformation amount toward the side away from the circuit board in the connector height direction.
 9. The circuit board electrical connector according to claim 1, wherein the movable housing is positioned on the inner side in the connector width direction than the specific elastic portion to have a range overlapping with the specific elastic portion of the intermediate portion in the connector height direction, and the specific elastic portion is configured to abut on the movable housing when being elastically deformable by the predetermined deformation amount in the connector width direction.
 10. The circuit board electrical connector according to claim 2, wherein the movable housing is

positioned on the inner side in the connector width direction than the specific elastic portion to have a range overlapping with the specific elastic portion of the intermediate portion in the connector height direction, and the specific elastic portion is configured to abut on the movable housing when being elastically deformable by the predetermined deformation amount in the connector width direction.

11. The circuit board electrical connector according to claim 3, wherein the movable housing is positioned on the inner side in the connector width direction than the specific elastic portion to have a range overlapping with the specific elastic portion of the intermediate portion in the connector height direction, and the specific elastic portion is configured to abut on the movable housing when being elastically deformable by the predetermined deformation amount in the connector width direction.

12. The circuit board electrical connector according to claim 4, wherein the movable housing is positioned on the inner side in the connector width direction than the specific elastic portion to have a range overlapping with the specific elastic portion of the intermediate portion in the connector height direction, and the specific elastic portion is configured to abut on the movable housing when being elastically deformable by the predetermined deformation amount in the connector width direction.

13. The circuit board electrical connector according to claim 5, wherein the movable housing is positioned on the inner side in the connector width direction than the specific elastic portion to have a range overlapping with the specific elastic portion of the intermediate portion in the connector height direction, and the specific elastic portion is configured to abut on the movable housing when being elastically deformable by the predetermined deformation amount in the connector width direction.

14. The circuit board electrical connector according to claim 6, wherein the movable housing is positioned on the inner side in the connector width direction than the specific elastic portion to have a range overlapping with the specific elastic portion of the intermediate portion in the connector height direction, and the specific elastic portion is configured to abut on the movable housing when being elastically deformable by the predetermined deformation amount in the connector width direction.

15. The circuit board electrical connector according to claim 7, wherein the movable housing is positioned on the inner side in the connector width direction than the specific elastic portion to have a range overlapping with the specific elastic portion of the intermediate portion in the connector height direction, and the specific elastic portion is configured to abut on the movable housing when being elastically deformable by the predetermined deformation amount in the connector width direction.

16. The circuit board electrical connector according to claim 8, wherein the movable housing is positioned on the inner side in the connector width direction than the specific elastic portion to have a range overlapping with the specific elastic portion of the intermediate portion in the connector height direction, and the specific elastic portion is configured to abut on the movable housing when being elastically deformable by the predetermined deformation amount in the connector width direction.

17. The circuit board electrical connector according to claim 9, wherein the intermediate portion includes a plurality of the elastic portions, and the plurality of elastic portions includes a fixed side elastic portion that is an elastic portion positioned between the specific elastic portion and the fixed side held portion besides the specific elastic portion.

18. The circuit board electrical connector according to claim 1, wherein the terminals further include an arm portion positioned between the intermediate portion and the fixed side held portion, and the arm portion extends along the connector width direction to be continuous with the intermediate portion, and elastically deformable in the connector height direction.
