CLAIMS

1. A process cartridge detachably mountable to a main assembly of the electrophotographic image forming apparatus including a main assembly side drive transmission member and a main assembly side urging member, said process cartridge comprising:

(i) a rotatable photosensitive member;

(ii) a rotatable developing roller configured to develop a latent image formed on said photosensitive member, said developing roller being capable of contacting to and the spacing from said photosensitive member;

(iii) an urging force receiving portion configured to receive an urging force from the main assembly side urging member to space said developing roller from said photosensitive member;

(iv) a cartridge side drive transmission member capable of coupling with the main assembly side drive transmission member to receive a rotational force for rotating said developing roller; and

(v) a releasing member capable of urging the main assembly side drive transmission member to decouple said cartridge side drive transmission member from the main assembly side drive transmission member by said urging force receiving portion receiving the urging force from the main assembly side urging member.

2. A process cartridge according to Claim 1, wherein said releasing member is movable between a first position in which the main assembly side drive transmission member is urged to prevent transmission of the rotational force to said cartridge side drive transmission member from the main assembly side drive transmission member, and a second position in which the transmission

of a driving force from the main assembly side drive transmission member to said cartridge side drive transmission member is permitted.

3. A process cartridge according to Claim 2, wherein said cartridge side drive transmission member is provided with a rotational force receiving portion configured to contact a rotational force applying portion of the main assembly side drive transmission member to receive the rotational force therefrom.

4. A process cartridge according to Claim 3, wherein as said rotational force receiving portion and said releasing member are projected onto a phantom line parallel with a rotational axis of said developing roller, an area of said rotational force receiving portion and an area of said releasing member are at least partly overlapped with each other when said releasing member is in the first position.

5. A process cartridge according to Claim 4, wherein the area of said rotational force receiving portion is all within the area of said releasing member on the phantom line when said releasing member is in the first position.

6. A process cartridge according to Claim 4 or 5, wherein a range in which the area of said rotational force receiving portion and the area of said releasing member are overlapped with each other on the phantom line expands by said releasing member moving from the second position to the first position.

7. A process cartridge according to Claim 4, wherein as said releasing member and said rotational force receiving portion are projected onto the phantom line, the area of said releasing member and the area of said rotational

force receiving portion are substantially not overlapped with each other when said releasing member is in the second position.

8. A process cartridge according to Claim 3, wherein a free end of said releasing member is substantially at the same position as a rear end of said rotational force receiving portion with respect to a longitudinal direction of said developing roller or at a position retracted inwardly therefrom when said releasing member is in the second position.

9. A process cartridge according to Claim 3, wherein a free end of said releasing member is substantially at the same position as a free end of said rotational force receiving portion with respect to the longitudinal direction of said developing roller or at a position outside thereof.

10. A process cartridge according to Claim 3, wherein said cartridge side drive transmission member includes an inclined portion inclined relative to the rotational axis of said developing roller adjacent said rotational force receiving portion, and said inclined portion contacts the main assembly side drive transmission member when said releasing member is in the first position.

11. A process cartridge according to Claim3, wherein said cartridge side drive transmission member is provided with a projection at an end portion thereof, and said projection is provided with said rotational force receiving portion.

12. A process cartridge according to Claim 3, wherein said rotational force receiving portion is exposed toward an outside of said process cartridge.

13. A process cartridge according to Claim 1, further comprising a drive transmission mechanism for transmitting the rotational force for rotating said developing roller to said developing roller, wherein said cartridge side drive transmission member is placed in an upstreammost position of said drive transmission mechanism with respect to a rotational force transmitting path to said developing roller.

14. A process cartridge according to Claim 1, wherein said releasing member includes a releasing member side force receiving portion configured to receive a force for urging said main assembly side drive transmission member, and a releasing member side urging portion capable of urging the main assembly side drive transmission member by the force received by said releasing member side force receiving portion.

15. A process cartridge according to Claim 14, wherein said releasing member side urging portion has an annular shape.

16. A process cartridge according to Claim 14, wherein a plurality of such releasing member side urging portions are provided.

17. A process cartridge according to Claim 16, wherein said releasing member side urging portions are arranged at regular intervals.

18. A process cartridge according to Claim 1, wherein said releasing member includes a second releasing member side force receiving portion configured to receive a force for moving inwardly of said process cartridge.

19. A process cartridge according to Claim 1, wherein said releasing member is movable substantially in parallel with the rotational axis of said developing roller.

20. A process cartridge according to Claim 19, wherein said releasing member is provided with a guide portion for guiding a portion-to-be-guided provided on said releasing member so as to move said releasing member substantially in parallel with the rotational axis of said developing roller.

21. A process cartridge according to Claim 20, wherein said guide portion extends substantially in parallel with the rotational axis of said developing roller.

22. A process cartridge according to Claim 20 or 21, wherein said portion-to-be-guided of said releasing member extends substantially in parallel with the rotational axis of said developing roller.

23. A process cartridge according to Claim 20, further comprising a cartridge frame, wherein said cartridge frame is provided with said guide portion.

24. A process cartridge according to Claim 4, further comprising a developing roller drive transmission member configured to transmit the rotational force received from said cartridge side drive transmission member to said developing roller.

25. A process cartridge according to Claim 24, wherein said developing roller drive transmission member includes a gear portion configured to receive the rotational force to be transmitted to said developing roller.

26. A process cartridge according to Claim 1, wherein said releasing member move toward an outside of said process cartridge when said urging force receiving portion receives the urging force from the main assembly side urging member.

27. A process cartridge according Claim 1, wherein when said urging force receiving portion receives the urging force from the main assembly side urging member, said releasing member is moved outwardly in the longitudinal direction of said developing roller.

28. A process cartridge according to Claim 27, further comprising a developing device frame rotatably supporting said developing roller, wherein said developing device frame supports said releasing member.

29. A process cartridge according Claim 1, wherein in said cartridge side drive transmission member supports said releasing member.

30. A process cartridge according to Claim 1, wherein said releasing member is disposed adjacent to said cartridge side drive transmission member.

31. A process cartridge according to Claim 1, wherein said releasing member includes a substantially cylindrical releasing member side cylindrical portion, and said releasing member is reciprocable in a state that said cartridge side drive transmission member is in said releasing member side cylindrical portion.

32. A process cartridge according to Claim 1, wherein said cartridge side drive transmission member is provided with a through hole therein, and said releasing member is reciprocable in said through hole.

33. A process cartridge according to Claim 1, further comprising a rotatable member rotatable relative to said releasing member, and said rotatable member moves said releasing member in the longitudinal direction of said developing roller by rotation relative to said releasing member.

34. A process cartridge Claim 33, wherein an orientation of the longitudinal movement of said developing roller is changed by changing a rotational direction of said rotatable member relative to said releasing member.

35. A process cartridge according to Claim 33 or 34, wherein said rotatable member includes a rotatable member side urging portion configured to apply in outward force in the longitudinal direction of said developing roller to said releasing member by rotation relative to said releasing member.

36. A process cartridge according to Claim 35, wherein said rotatable member side urging portion urges the releasing member side force receiving portion of said releasing member, and at least one of said releasing member side force receiving portion and said rotatable member side urging portion is inclined relative to the rotational axis of said developing roller.

37. A process cartridge according to Claim 36, wherein said releasing member side force receiving portion and said rotatable member side urging portion are in contact with each other at the portions inclined relative to the

rotational axis when said releasing member urges the main assembly side drive transmission member.

38. A process cartridge according to Claim 33, wherein said rotatable member includes a second rotatable member side urging portion configured to apply an inward force with respect to a longitudinal direction of said developing roller to said releasing member by rotation relative to said releasing member.

39. A process cartridge according to claim 38, wherein said second rotatable member side urging portion is configured to urge a second releasing member side force receiving portion provided on said releasing member, and at least one of said second releasing member side force receiving portion and said second rotatable member side urging portion is inclined relative to the rotational axis said developing roller.

40. A process cartridge according to Claim 39, wherein said second releasing member side force receiving portion and said second rotatable member side urging portion are contacted with each other at portions inclined relative to the rotational axis in the state that said releasing member is retracted inwardly of said process cartridge.

41. A process cartridge according to Claim 33, further comprising an elastic member for applying a force to said releasing member.

42. A process cartridge according to Claim 41, wherein said rotatable member moves said releasing member toward an outside of said process cartridge against the force of said elastic member, by rotating in a predetermined rotational

moving direction.

43. A process cartridge according to Claim 42, wherein said rotatable member permits said releasing member to be moved toward an inside of said process cartridge by the force of said elastic member by rotating in a direction opposite to the predetermined rotational moving direction.

44. A process cartridge according to Claim 42 or 43, wherein said rotatable member is provided with a rotatable member side urging portion for urging said releasing member toward an outside of said process cartridge by rotation thereof.

45. A process cartridge according to Claim 41, wherein said rotatable member permits said releasing member to move toward an outside of said process cartridge by the force of said elastic member, by rotating in the predetermined rotational moving direction.

46. A process cartridge according to Claim 45, wherein said rotatable member moves said releasing member to an inside of said process cartridge against the force of said elastic member, by rotating in a direction opposite to the predetermined rotational moving direction.

47. A process cartridge according to Claim 45 or 46, wherein said rotatable member is provided with a rotatable member side urging portion for urging said releasing member toward an inside of said process cartridge, by rotation thereof.

48. A process cartridge according to Claim 45, wherein said rotatable member is provided with a limiting portion for limiting movement of said releasing member toward an outside of said cartridge by the force of said elastic member.

49. A process cartridge according to claim 48, wherein by contact of said limiting portion to a limited portion provided on said releasing member, the movement of said releasing member toward an outside of said cartridge is limited and wherein by separation of said limiting portion from said limited portion, the movement of said releasing member toward an outside of said cartridge is permitted.

50. A process cartridge according to Claim 48 or 49, wherein said limiting portion includes a surface substantially perpendicular to the rotational axis of said developing roller.

51. A process cartridge according to Claim 33, further comprising a developing device frame rotatably supporting said developing roller, wherein said rotatable member is rotatable relative to said developing device frame.

52. A process cartridge according to Claim 51, wherein said rotatable member is provided with a substantially ring portion.

53. A process cartridge according to Claim 52, wherein said rotatable member is provided with a projected portion projected from said ring portion.

54. A process cartridge according to claim 53, further comprising a

photosensitive member frame rotatably supporting said photosensitive member, wherein said projected portion is engaged with said photosensitive member frame.

55. A process cartridge according to Claim 33, wherein said rotatable member is a developing device frame supporting said developing roller.

56. A process cartridge according to claim 55, further comprising a photosensitive member frame rotatably supporting said photosensitive member, wherein said developing roller is capable of being separated from said photosensitive member by rotating said developing device frame relative to said photosensitive member frame.

57. A process cartridge according to claim 56, wherein said releasing member is provided with a portion-to-be-engaged for limiting rotation of said releasing member together with said developing device frame, by engagement with said photosensitive member frame.

58. A process cartridge according Claim 33, wherein said rotatable member is a photosensitive member frame rotatably supporting said photosensitive member.

59. A process cartridge according to Claim 58, further comprising a developing device frame rotatably supporting said developing roller, wherein said releasing member rotates together with said developing device frame, relative to said photosensitive member frame.

60. A process cartridge according to Claim 1, further comprising a

developing device frame rotatably supporting said developing roller, and a photosensitive member frame rotatably supporting said photosensitive member, wherein said developing roller is capable of being spaced from said photosensitive member by rotation of said developing device frame relative to said photosensitive member frame.

61. A process cartridge according to Claim 60, wherein a rotation axis of said cartridge side drive transmission member is substantially coaxial with a rotational center of said developing device frame relative to said photosensitive member frame.

62. A process cartridge according to any one of Claim 1, further comprising a developing device frame rotatably supporting said developing roller, wherein said releasing member receives the force for rotating the main assembly side drive transmission member, from said developing device frame.

63. A process cartridge according to Claim 1, further comprising a photosensitive member frame rotatably supporting said photosensitive member, wherein said releasing member receives the force for urging the main assembly side drive transmission member, from said photosensitive member frame.

64. A process cartridge according to Claim 1, wherein the force for urging the main assembly side drive transmission member is applied to said releasing member.

65. A process cartridge according to Claim 1, further comprising a developing device frame rotatably supporting said developing roller, wherein said

releasing member receives the force for moving to an inside of said process cartridge, from said developing device frame.

66. A process cartridge according to Claim 1, further comprising a photosensitive member frame rotatably supporting said photosensitive member, wherein said releasing member receives the force for moving to an inside of said process cartridge, from said photosensitive member frame.

67. A process cartridge according to Claim 1, wherein the force for moving to an inside of said process cartridge is applied to said releasing member.

68. A process cartridge according to Claim 1, wherein as seen in a direction along the rotational axis of said developing roller, said developing roller is disposed between said cartridge side drive transmission member and said urging force receiving portion.