

SUPPORTING APPARATUS OF FLEXIBLE PRINTED CIRCUIT BOARD
OF LENS BARREL

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The present invention relates to a lens barrel, and more precisely, it relates to a supporting apparatus of a flexible printed circuit board connected to a cylindrical shutter unit in a lens barrel.

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15 In a lens shutter type of camera, a cylindrical shutter unit is provided in a lens barrel. As is well known, the shutter unit drives a focusing lens group in accordance with a distance signal of a subject to be taken, detected by an object distance measuring device and opens
20 and closes shutter blades in accordance with a luminance signal of the subject detected by a light measuring device. The shutter unit is usually provided on its front end face with driving signal terminals which are connected to a front end of a flexible printed circuit board which will be
25 referred to as a FPC board hereinafter. The FPC board extends along the circumference of the shutter unit to the rear side of the camera body to be connected to a control circuit provided in the camera body through a guide means.

The FPC board is adhered to the shutter unit by an
30 adhesive tape or an adhesive or the like so as not to move or extrude outwardly on the peripheral surface of the shutter unit. However, the shutter unit (i.e. the outer diameter thereof) is made as small as possible to realize a compact and small camera, and accordingly, shutter
35 components, such as a driving gear or a spring is partially exposed from the shutter unit. Accordingly, upon adhering

the FPC board to the shutter unit, the adhesive tape or the adhesive must be carefully used so as not to interfere with the exposed shutter components, which is a very troublesome operation.

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An object of the present invention is to provide a supporting apparatus of a FPC board which can be supported on a shutter unit so as not to move or extrude
10 outwardly on a peripheral surface of the shutter unit, without using an adhesive tape or an adhesive.

The present invention is featured by the provision of a keeping member of the FPC board on the rear end of a shutter holding frame to which a shutter unit is secured to
15 hold the FPC board to extend along the rear end face of the shutter holding frame.

According to the present invention there is provided a lens barrel comprising: a cylindrical shutter unit; a shutter holding
20 frame which holds a rear end portion of the shutter unit; a flexible printed circuit board which extends rearwardly from the front end of the shutter unit along the circumference thereof; and, a keeping member which is provided on the rear end of the shutter holding frame to
25 hold the flexible printed circuit board past the circumference of the shutter unit to extend along the rear end of the shutter holding frame.

With this arrangement, since the FPC board beyond the circumference of the shutter unit is bent along the rear
30 end face of the shutter holding frame and is firmly held by the keeping member on the rear end face of the shutter holding frame, neither adhesive tape nor adhesive are necessary to hold the FPC board. No loosening of the FPC board occurs.

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Preferably said shutter holding frame is provided on its rear end with a recess.

Conveniently, the keeping member defines a passage of the flexible printed circuit board between the keeping member and the recess. In one case, the passage of the flexible printed circuit board has a width slightly larger than the thickness of the flexible printed circuit board.

In a particular embodiment, said passage of the flexible printed circuit board is bent into a generally V-shape in cross section.

Conveniently, said keeping member has a bent portion which guides and bends radially outwardly the flexible printed circuit board which extends along the rear end of the shutter holding frame.

It is preferred that the keeping member is attached to the shutter holding frame, so that the keeping member permits the flexible printed circuit board to move in the passage when the flexible printed circuit board is tensed and prevents the flexible printed circuit board from moving when no tensile force is applied thereto.

The lens barrel may further comprise a lens frame which holds the shutter unit and which moves in an optical axis direction of the lens barrel during the zooming.

An example of the present invention will now be described below in details with reference to the accompanying drawings, in which:-

Figure 1 is an exploded perspective view of a main part of a lens barrel according to an embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 2 is a side elevation view of a main part of a lens barrel shown in Figure 1, when assembled; and

Fig. 3 is a longitudinal sectional view of a whole lens barrel, of which an upper half shows a retracted position in which a lens group is retracted in a camera body and a lower half shows a projection position (telephoto position) in which the lens group projects outwardly from the camera body.

The illustrated embodiment is applied to a zoom lens barrel, as disclosed in GB-A-2 237 406 filed in the name of the assignee of the present application.

Fig. 3 shows a whole construction of such a zoom lens barrel. An immovable lens barrel 11 integral with a camera body has a helicoid ring 12 secured thereto which has a female helicoid 12a which is engaged by a male helicoid 10a formed on the outer periphery of a cam ring 10. The cam ring 10 is provided, on its inner peripheral surface, with a female helicoid 10b and a cam groove or cam grooves (not shown). The female helicoid 10b is engaged by a male helicoid 13a which is formed on a front lens barrel 13. The cam ring 10 is provided on its rear end with a linear movement guide plate 14 secured thereto which has a radial projection 14a which is fitted in a linear movement guide groove 11a formed on the immovable lens barrel 11. A linear movement guide ring 15 is secured to the linear movement guide plate 14. The cam ring 10 is free to rotate relative to the linear movement guide ring 15.

A shutter holding frame 13b is secured to a rear end of an annular shutter unit 16 which is secured to the front lens barrel 13. The shutter unit 16 is provided on its inner peripheral surface with a helicoid ring 17 integral therewith which is engaged by a front lens frame 18 which holds a front lens group L1. The shutter unit 16 has a driving pin 16a which engages with a driven pin 18a provided on the front lens frame 18 integral therewith. The driving pin 16a is rotated through an angular displacement determined in accordance

with a subject distance signal outputted from an object distance measuring device (not shown), as is well known. The rotation of the driving pin 16a is transmitted to the front lens frame 18 through the driven pin 18a, so that the
5 front lens frame 18 (the front lens group L1) is moved while rotating in the optical axis direction through the shutter unit 16 to effect the focusing. The shutter unit 16 opens and closes shutter blades 16b in accordance with the luminance signal of the subject to be taken.

10 A rear lens frame 19 which holds a rear lens group L2 has a cam pin (not shown) which projects in the radial direction to be fitted in the cam groove (not shown) formed on the inner surface of the cam ring 10. The rear lens frame 19 and the shutter holding frame 13b are guided by
15 the linear guide surfaces of the linear guide ring 15 so as to linearly move in the optical axis direction.

Consequently, when the cam ring 10 rotates, the cam ring 10 is moved in the optical axis direction in accordance with the engagement of the male helicoid 10a and
20 the female helicoid 12a. At the same time, the front lens frame 13 and accordingly the front lens group L1 are moved in the optical axis direction in accordance with the engagement of the female helicoid 10b and the male helicoid 13a through the linear movement guide mechanism of the
25 shutter holding frame 13b and the linear movement guide ring 15. Also, the rotation of the cam ring 10 causes the rear lens frame 19 and accordingly the rear lens group L2 to move in the optical axis direction, in accordance with the engagement of the cam pin (not shown) of the rear lens
30 frame 19 and the cam groove (not shown) formed on the inner surface of the cam ring 10 through the linear movement guide mechanism of the rear lens frame 19 and the linear movement guide ring 15 to effect the zooming operation.

The annular shutter unit 16 is provided on its front
35 end face with driving signal terminals (not shown) to which the front end of an FPC board 20 is secured. The FPC board

20 extends rearwardly along the circumference of the shutter unit 16 and is supported on the rear end face of the shutter holding frame 13b by a keeping member 21 embodying one of the most significant features of the present invention.

Namely, the shutter holding frame 13b has a laterally elongated recess 22 having a width corresponding to the width of the FPC board 20, as shown in Figs. 1 and 2. The shutter holding frame 13b is provided with a mount 23 at the vicinity of one end of the lateral recess 22 and a supporting projection 24 in the vicinity of the other end of the lateral recess 22, respectively. The mount 23 has a threaded hole 23a in which a set screw 25 can be screwed. The supporting projection 24 has at its front end a retaining piece 24a projecting therefrom toward the lateral recess 22.

The plate-like keeping member (frictional holder) 21 is held between the mount 23 and the supporting projection 24. The keeping member 21 has a through hole 21a corresponding to the threaded hole 23a of the mount 23 and a bifurcated portion 21b corresponding to the supporting projection 24 (retaining piece 24a). Also, the keeping member 21 is provided on its intermediate portion with a laterally extending pusher 21c which projects into the lateral recess 22 of the shutter holding frame 13b and a bent portion 21d which is adapted to smoothly guide and bend the FPC board 20 outwardly along therewith below the recess 22, respectively.

The keeping member 21 is held between and by the mount 23 and the supporting projection 24, so that the FPC board 20 which extends rearwardly from the front end of the shutter unit 16 along the circumference thereof is held in the recess 22 by the keeping member 21 (the pusher 21c thereof). Namely, the bifurcated portion 21b of the keeping member 21 is pressed against the supporting projection 24 inside the retaining piece 24a, and the set

screw 25 is inserted in the through hole 21a of the keeping member 21 and is screwed in the threaded hole 23a of the mount 23. In this state, a generally V-shaped (in cross section) passage 26 for the FPC board 20 is defined between the lateral pusher 21c and the lateral recess 22, as shown in Fig. 2. The V-shaped passage 26 has a width s which is slightly larger than the thickness t of the FPC board 20. The width (distance) s is determined so that on one hand, the FPC board 20 can move in the passage 26 when the FPC board 20 is tensed, and on the other hand, no accidental displacement of the FPC board 20 takes place due to the frictional force between the passage 26 and the FPC board 20 when the tensile force is released from the FPC board 20.

In the supporting apparatus as constructed above embodying the present invention, the keeping member 21 is secured to the rear end of the shutter holding frame 13b while the FPC board 20 is flexibly bent as shown by a phantom line in Figs. 1 and 2. Thereafter, when the FPC board 20 is tensed at the rear portion thereof, the FPC board 20 extends along and close to the circumference of the shutter unit 16. Even if the tensile force is released, the aforementioned portion of the FPC board 20 is maintained in the tensed state due to the frictional force between the passage 26 (the lateral pusher 21c of the keeping member 21 and the lateral recess 22 of the shutter holding frame 13b) and the FPC board 20. Thus, the FPC board 20 can be firmly held on the circumference of the shutter unit 16 closely thereto without using an adhesive tape or an adhesive, unlike the prior art in which an adhesive tape or an adhesive must be inevitably used, as mentioned before.

The FPC board 20 extends past the keeping member 21 radially outwardly along the bent portion 21d of the keeping member 21. The FPC board 20 further extends forwardly along the inner surface of the linear movement guide ring 15 and is bent rearward at the front end of the linear movement guide ring 15 to extend again rearwardly along the outer

surface of the linear movement guide ring 15, as shown in Fig. 3. The FPC board 20 is further bent forwardly again behind the linear movement guide ring 15, passes through a gap between the helicoid ring 12 and the immovable barrel 11, and is connected to a control circuit 27 of the camera body. The control circuit 27 outputs an operational signal to the shutter unit 16 through the FPC board 20 in accordance with the subject distance signal and the subject luminance signal.

The guide and the passage of the FPC board 20 past the keeping member 21 are not the subject of the present invention and accordingly can be modified.

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CLAIMS:

1. A lens barrel comprising:
a cylindrical shutter unit;
5 a shutter holding frame which holds a rear end portion of the shutter unit;
a flexible printed circuit board which extends rearwardly from the front end of the shutter unit along the circumference thereof; and,
10 a keeping member which is provided on the rear end of the shutter holding frame to hold the flexible printed circuit board past the circumference of the shutter unit to extend along the rear end of the shutter holding frame.
2. A lens barrel according to claim 1, wherein said
15 shutter holding frame is provided on its rear end with a recess.
3. A lens barrel according to claim 2, wherein said keeping member defines a passage of the flexible printed circuit board between the keeping member and the recess.
- 20 4. A lens barrel according to claim 3, wherein said passage of the flexible printed circuit board has a width slightly larger than the thickness of the flexible printed circuit board.
- 25 5. A lens barrel according to claim 3 or 4 wherein said passage of the flexible printed circuit board is bent into a generally V-shape in cross section.
6. A lens barrel according to any preceding claim wherein said keeping member has a bent portion which guides and bends radially outwardly the flexible printed circuit board which
30 extends along the rear end of the shutter holding frame.
7. A lens barrel according to any preceding claim wherein said keeping member is attached to the shutter holding frame, so that the keeping member permits the flexible printed circuit board to move in the passage when the flexible printed circuit
35 board is tensed and prevents the flexible printed circuit board from moving when no tensile force is applied thereto.



8. A lens barrel according to any preceding claim further comprising a lens frame which holds the shutter unit and which moves in an optical axis direction of the lens barrel during the zooming.

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9. A lens barrel substantially as herein described with reference to Figures 1 and 2 of the accompanying drawings
