



US00RE38482E

(19) **United States**
(12) **Reissued Patent**
Leung et al.

(10) **Patent Number:** **US RE38,482 E**
(45) **Date of Reissued Patent:** ***Mar. 30, 2004**

(54) **DELAY STAGE CIRCUITRY FOR A RING OSCILLATOR**

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(*) Notice: This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

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(21) Appl. No.: **09/631,028**
(22) Filed: **Aug. 2, 2000**

Related U.S. Patent Documents

Reissue of:
(64) Patent No.: **5,799,051**
Issued: **Aug. 25, 1998**
Appl. No.: **08/711,908**
Filed: **Sep. 12, 1996**

U.S. Applications:

- (60) Continuation of application No. 08/347,844, filed on Dec. 1, 1994, now Pat. No. 5,596,610, which is a continuation of application No. 08/161,769, filed on Dec. 2, 1993, now abandoned, which is a division of application No. 07/890,034, filed on May 28, 1992, now abandoned.
- (51) **Int. Cl.⁷** **H03D 3/24**
(52) **U.S. Cl.** **375/357; 375/376; 375/377; 330/253; 330/261; 330/277; 327/154; 327/156; 327/163; 327/287; 327/288**
(58) **Field of Search** **375/219, 220, 375/222, 354, 357, 371, 373, 376, 377; 713/400, 401, 500; 327/291, 295, 297, 298, 287, 288; 330/253, 261, 277**

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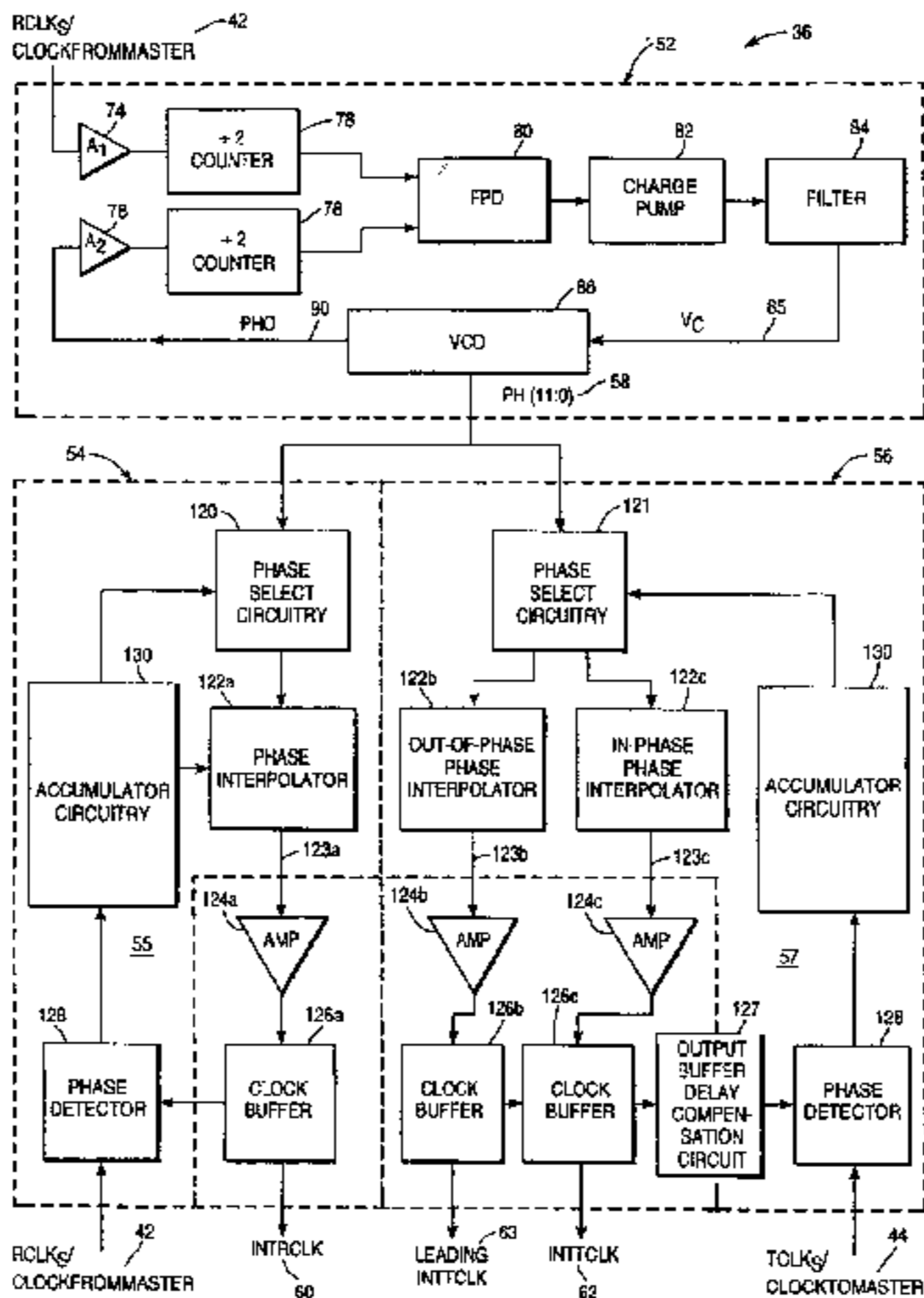
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

A ring oscillator includes an even-numbered plurality of ring coupled delay stages. Each delay stage includes a differential amplifier, a voltage clamping circuit, and a current source. The differential amplifier receives first and second input signals from a preceding delay stage. The differential amplifier provides a first output signal and a complementary second output signal at first and second nodes, respectively. The voltage clamping circuit is coupled between the first and second nodes to limit a peak-to-peak voltage swing of each of the first and second output signals. The current source is coupled to the differential amplifier and varies a bias current in accordance with a delay bias voltage.

103 Claims, 14 Drawing Sheets



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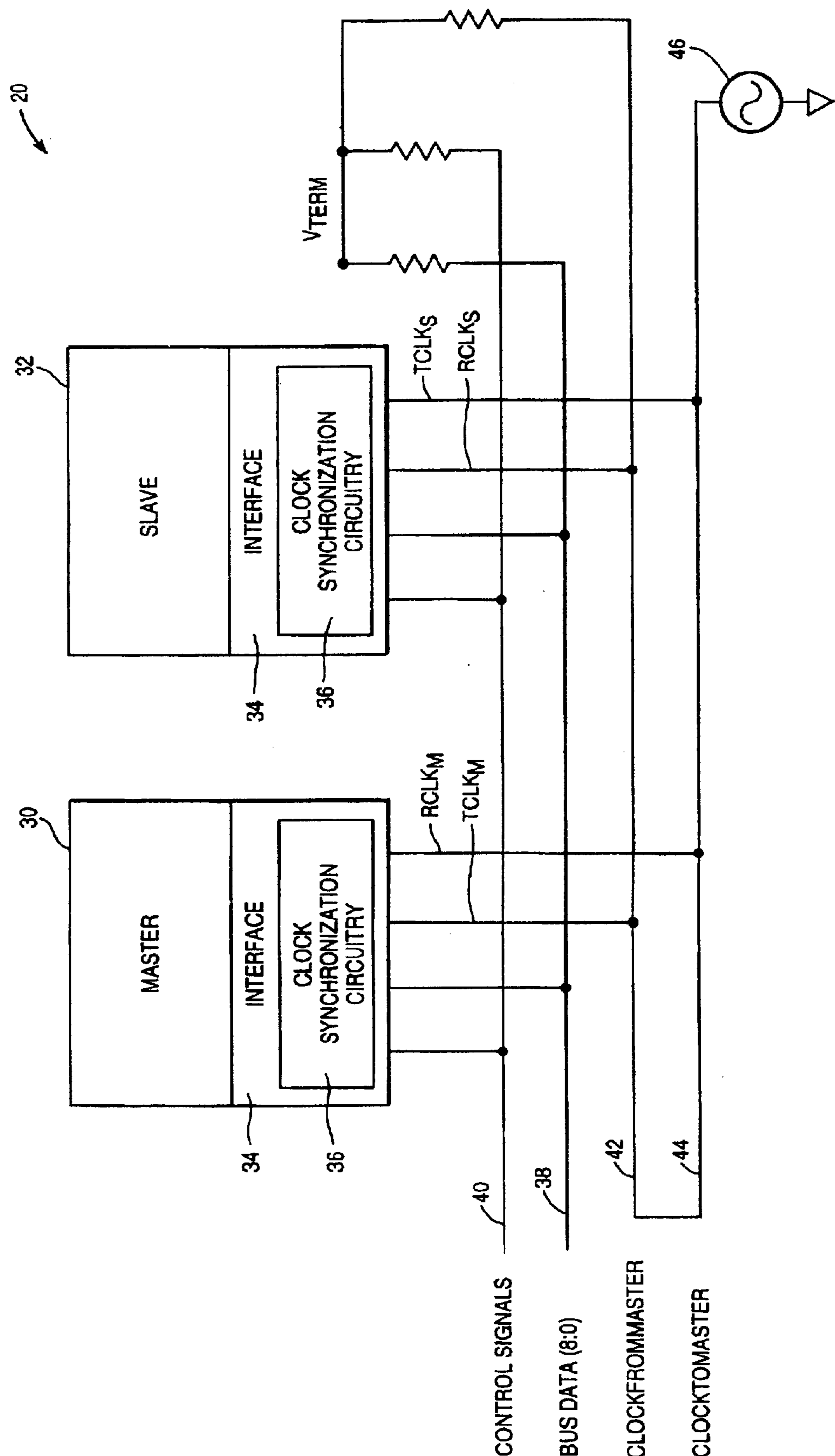


FIG. 1

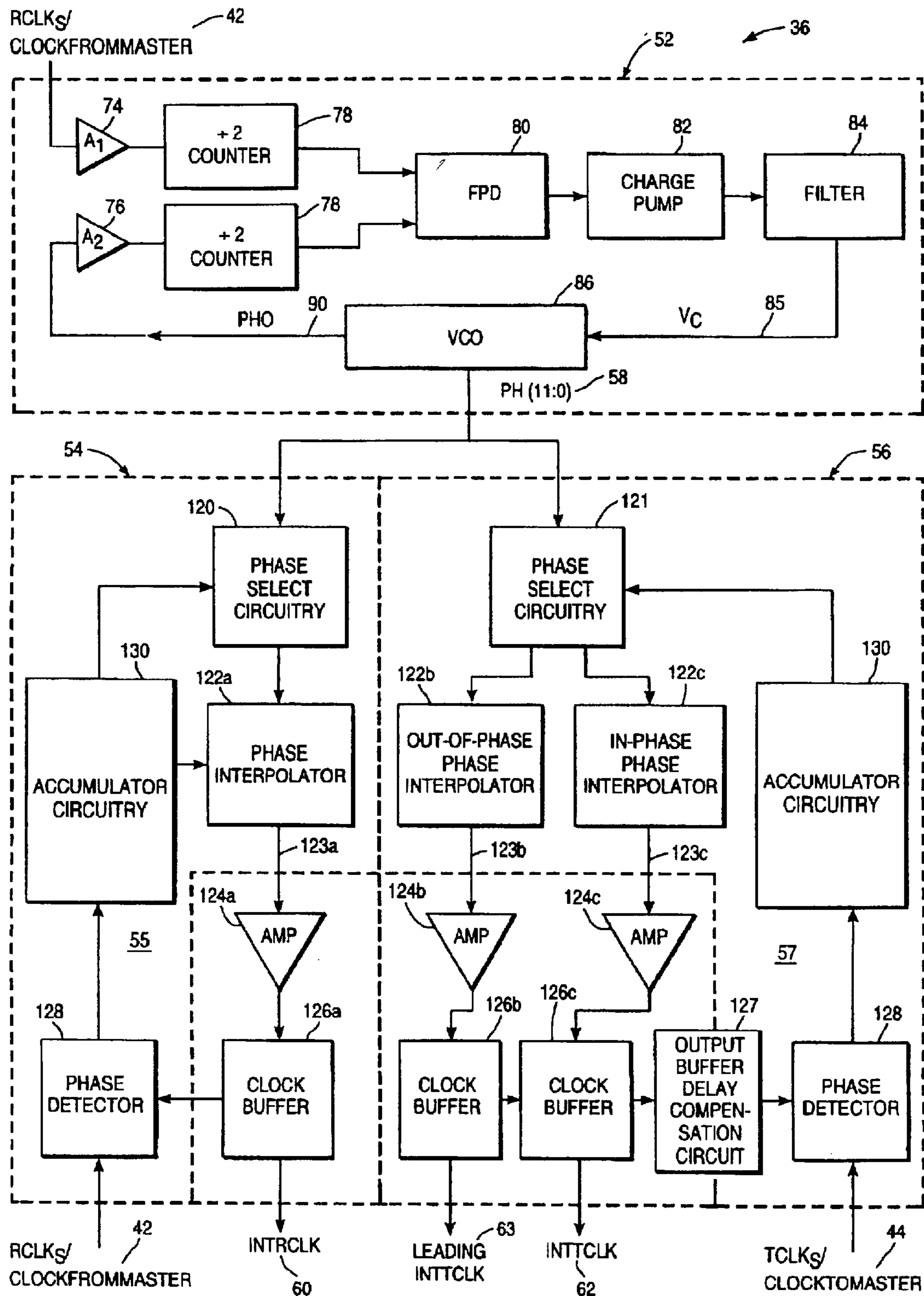
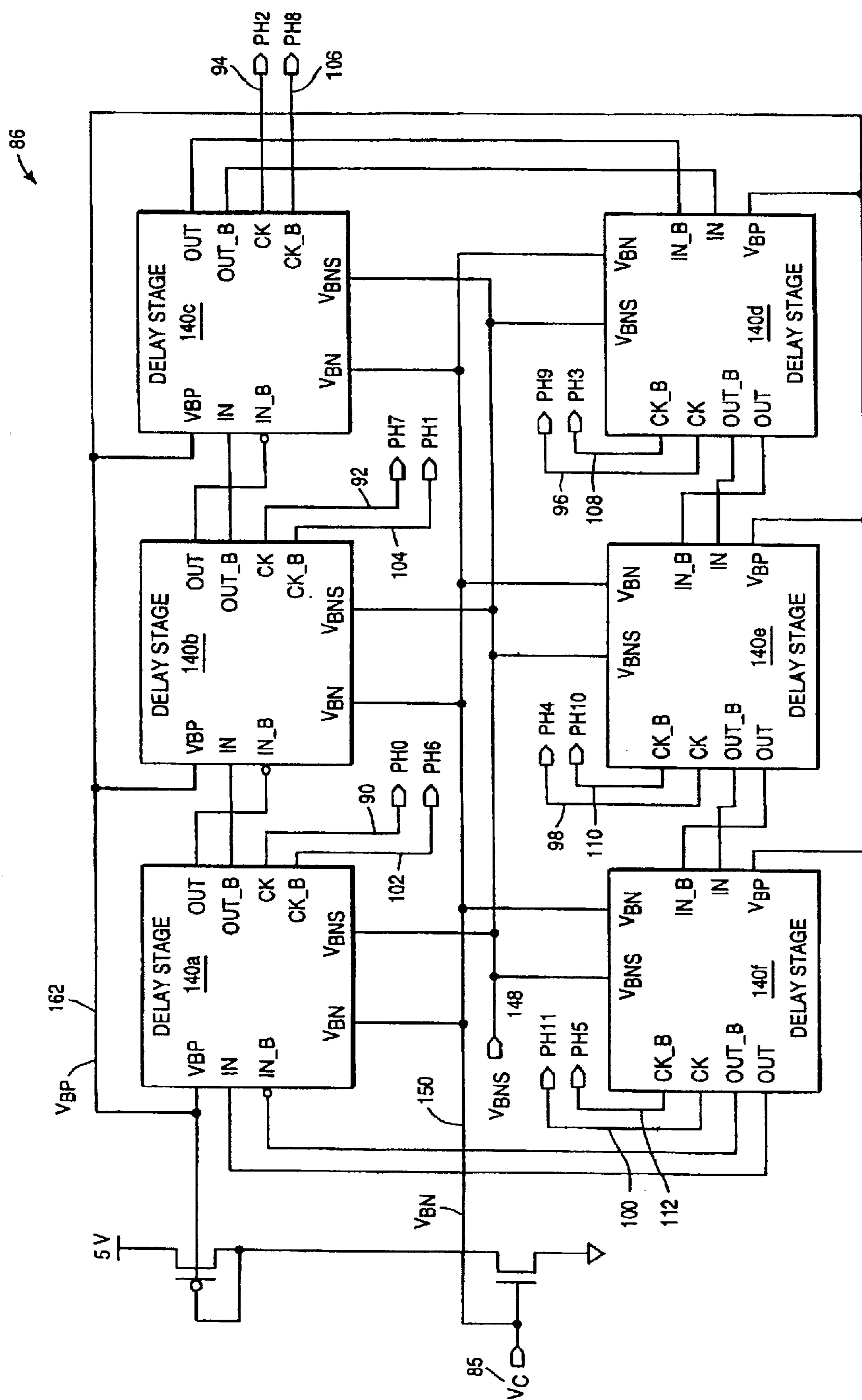


FIG. 2



THE

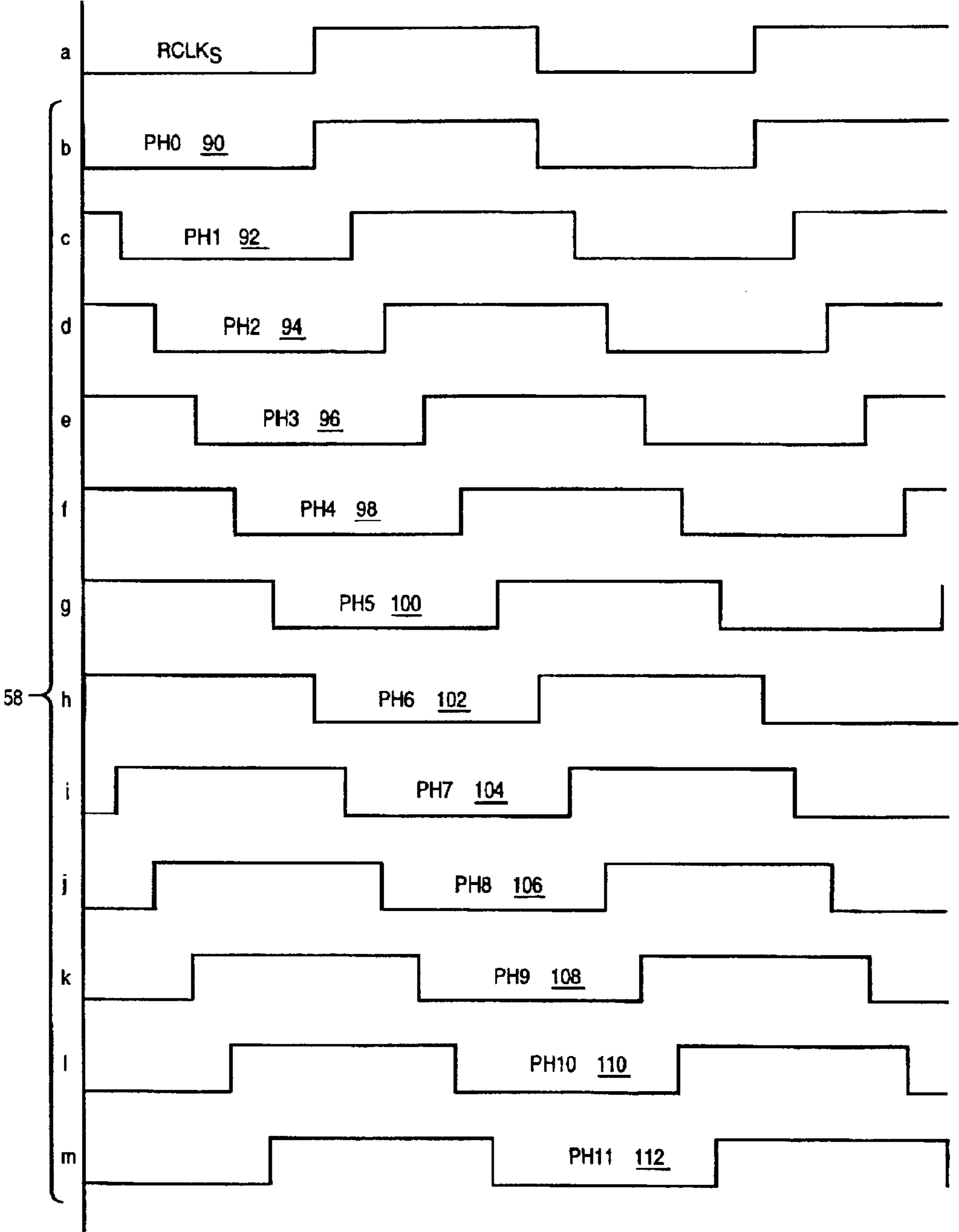
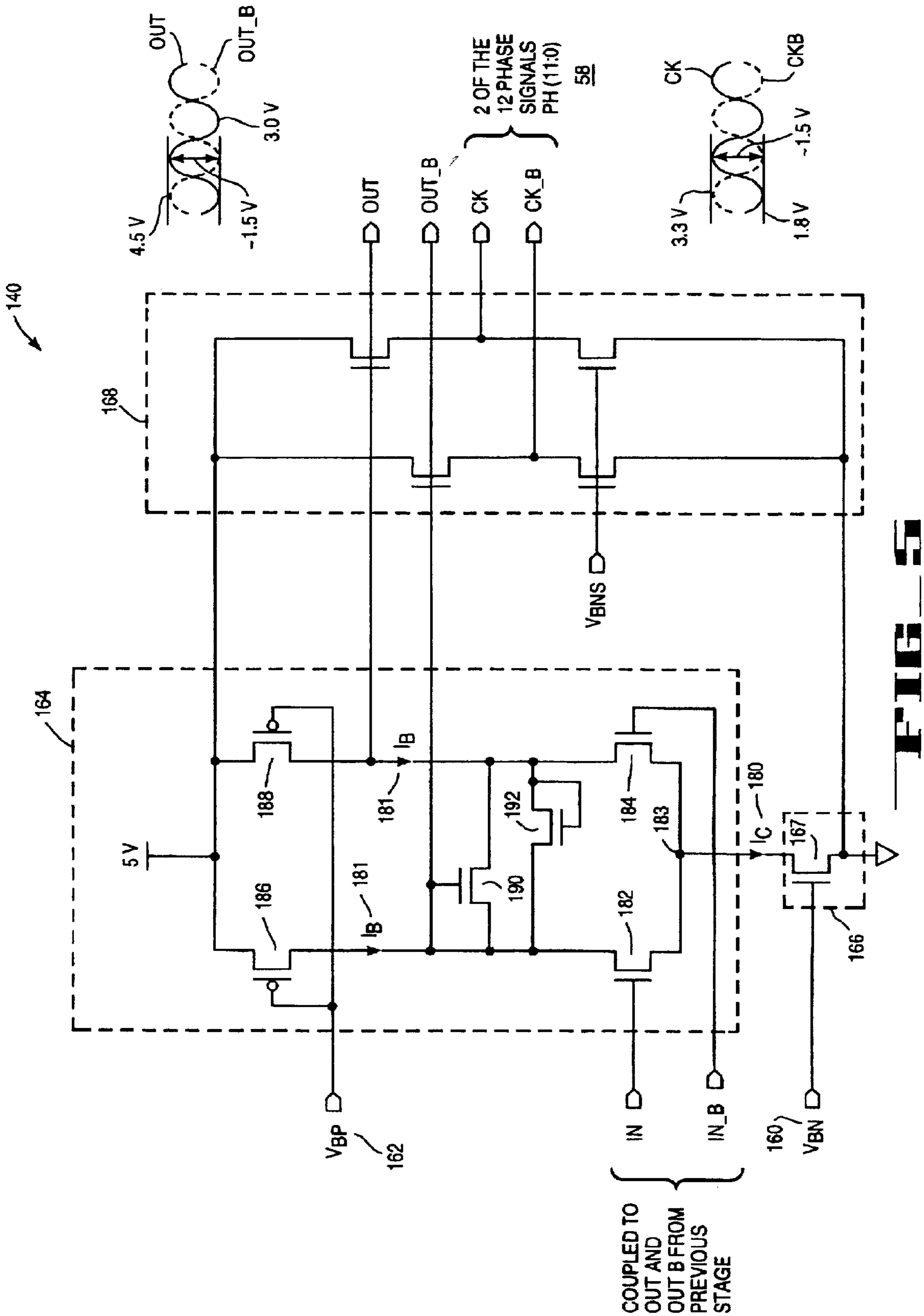


FIG. 4



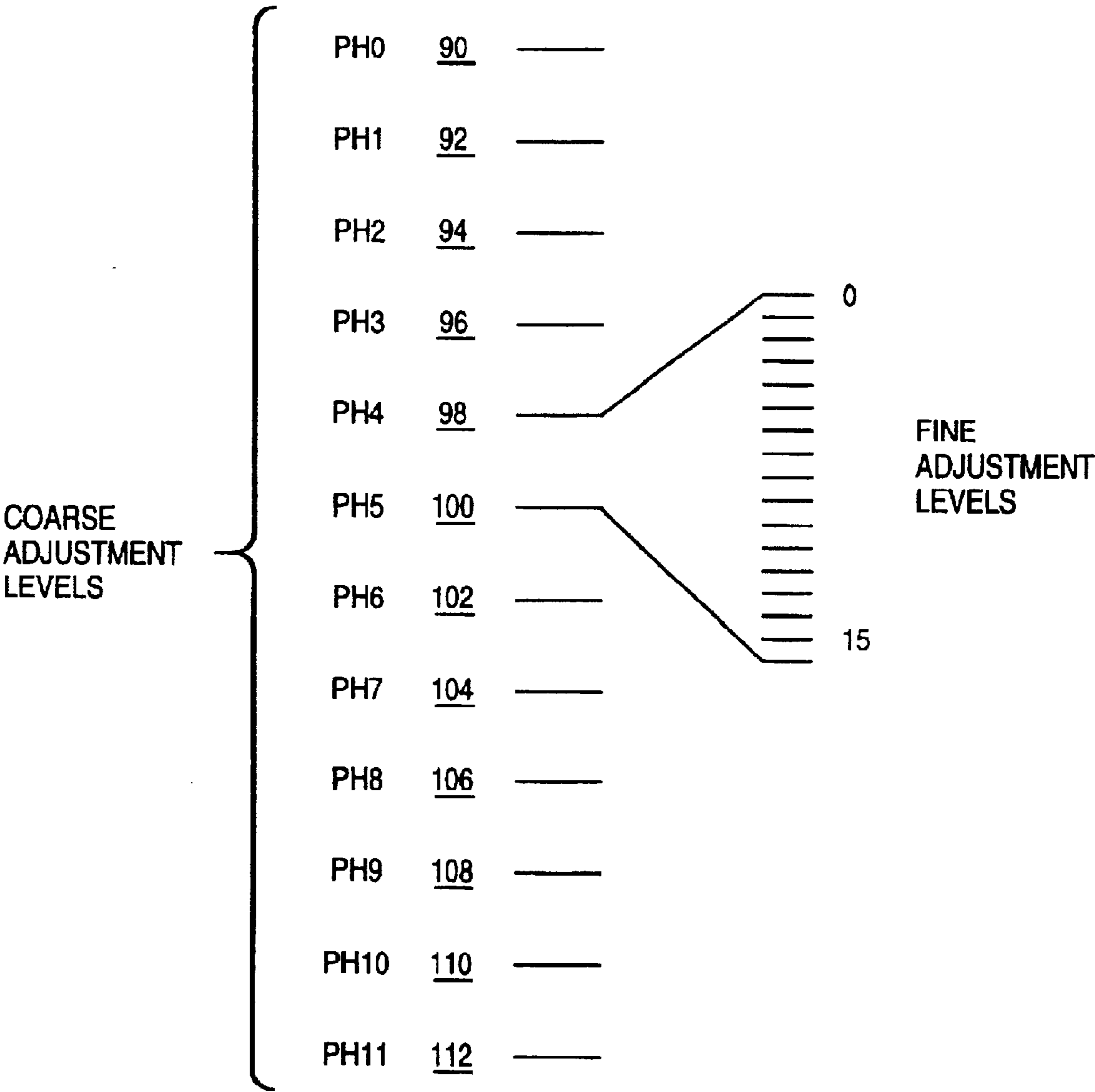


FIG. 6

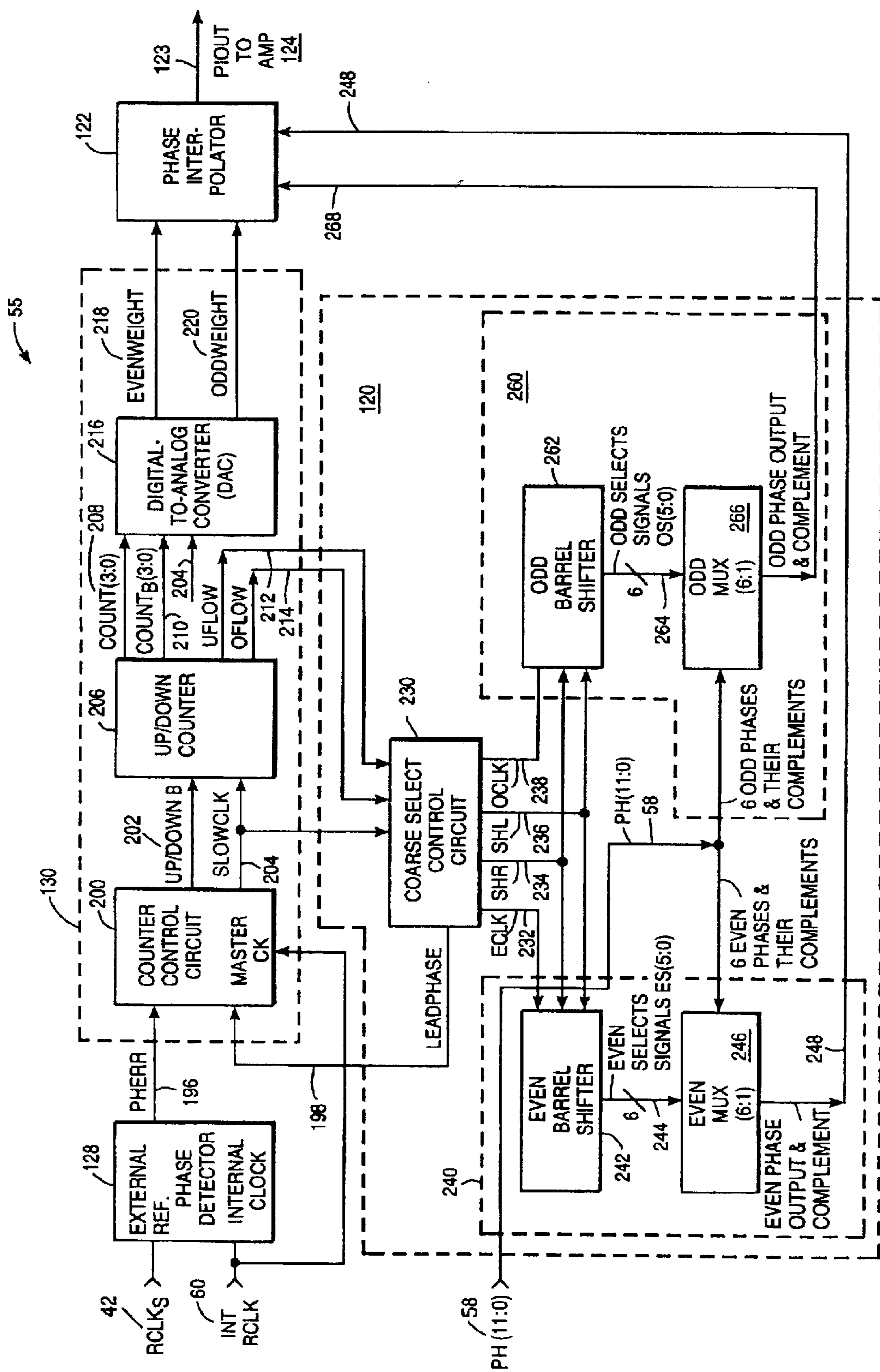


FIG. 7

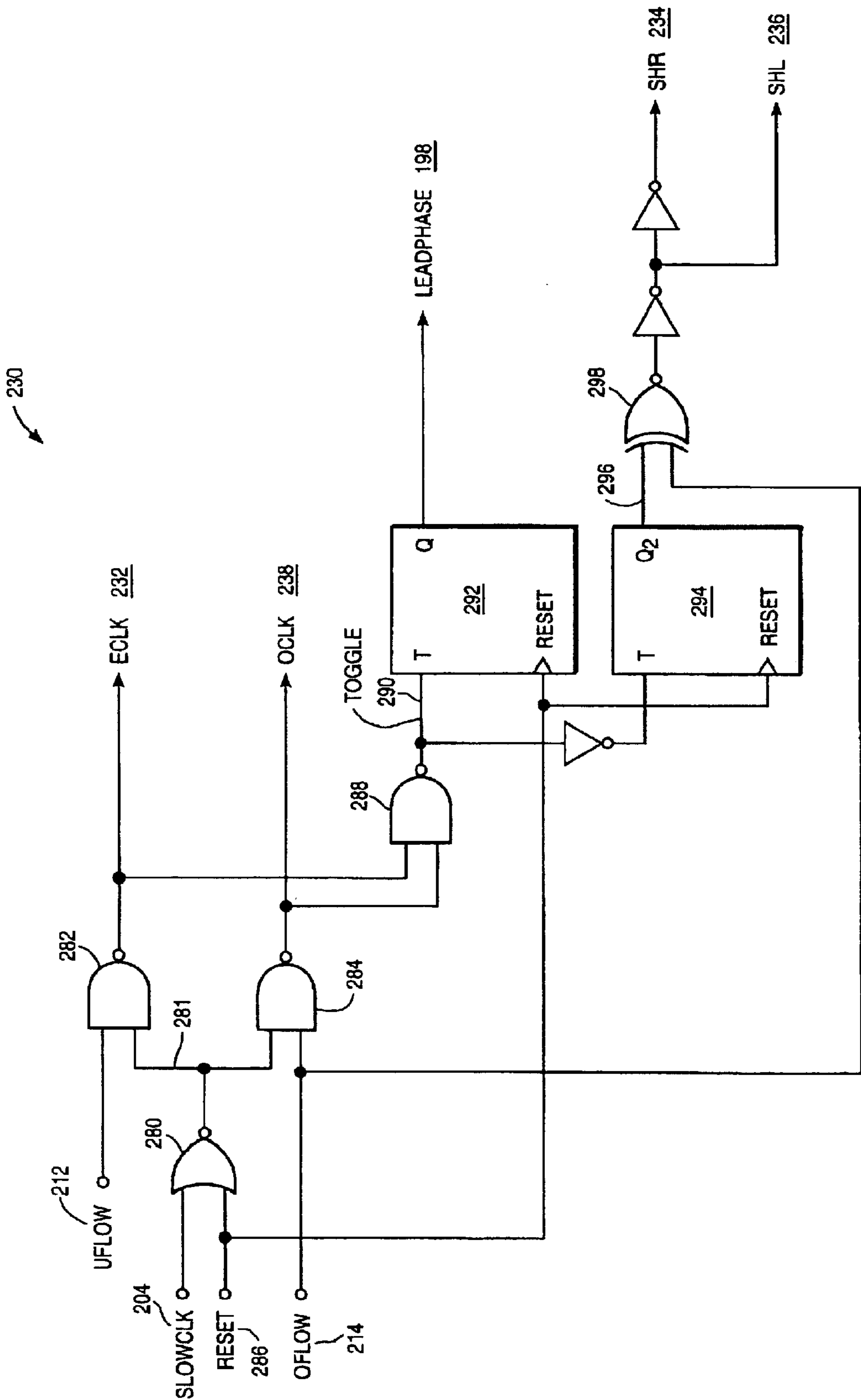


FIG. 8

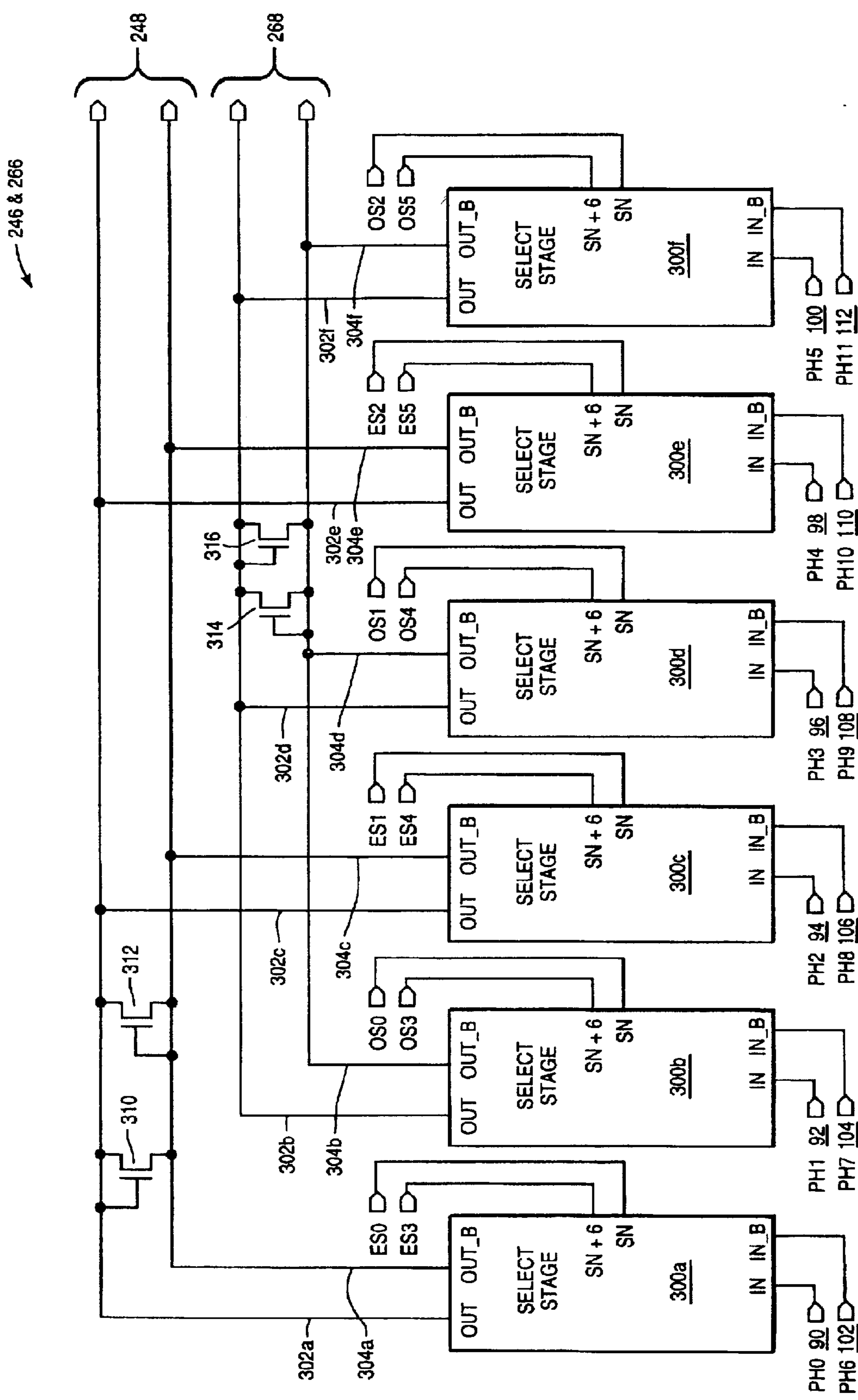


FIG. 9

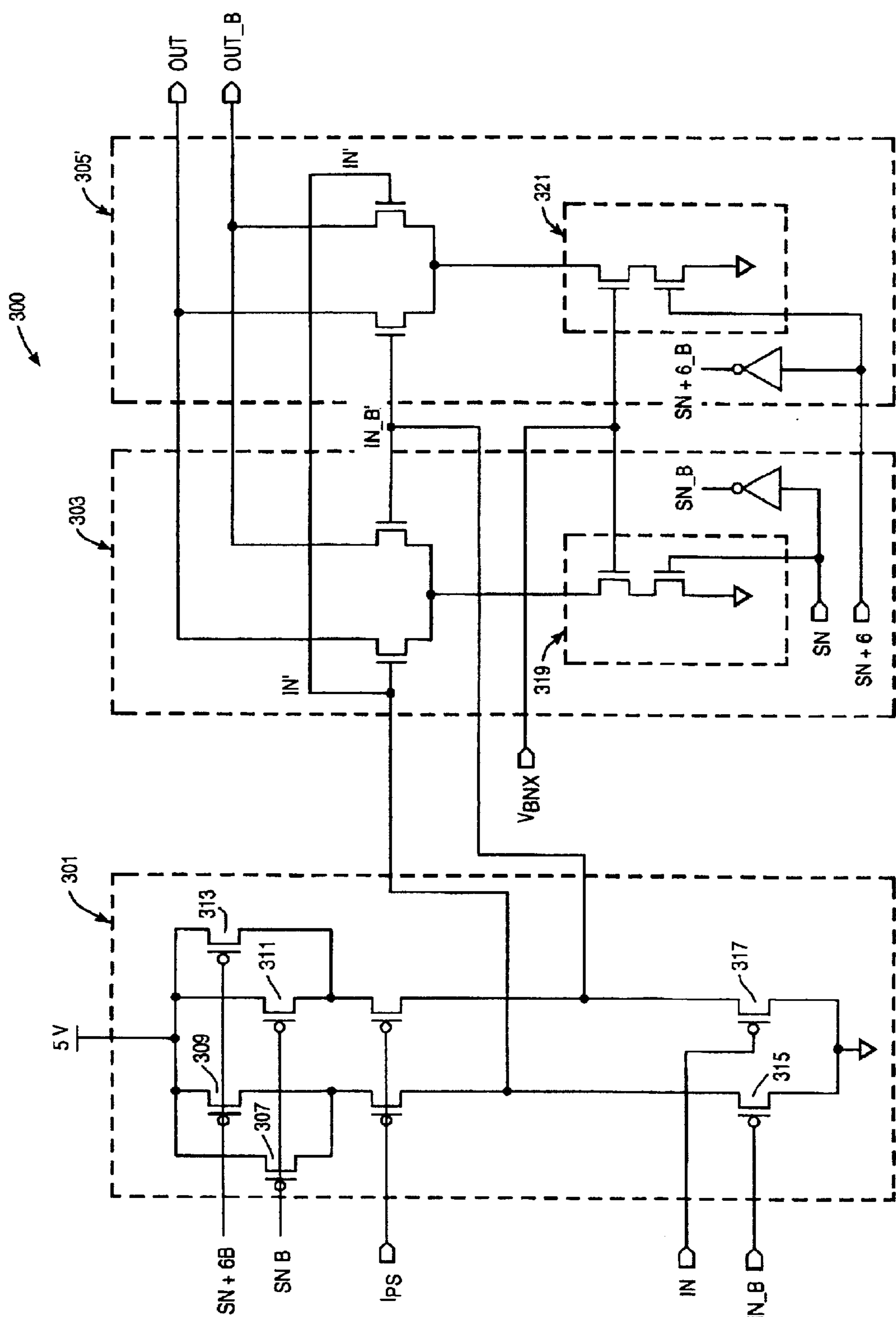


FIG. 10

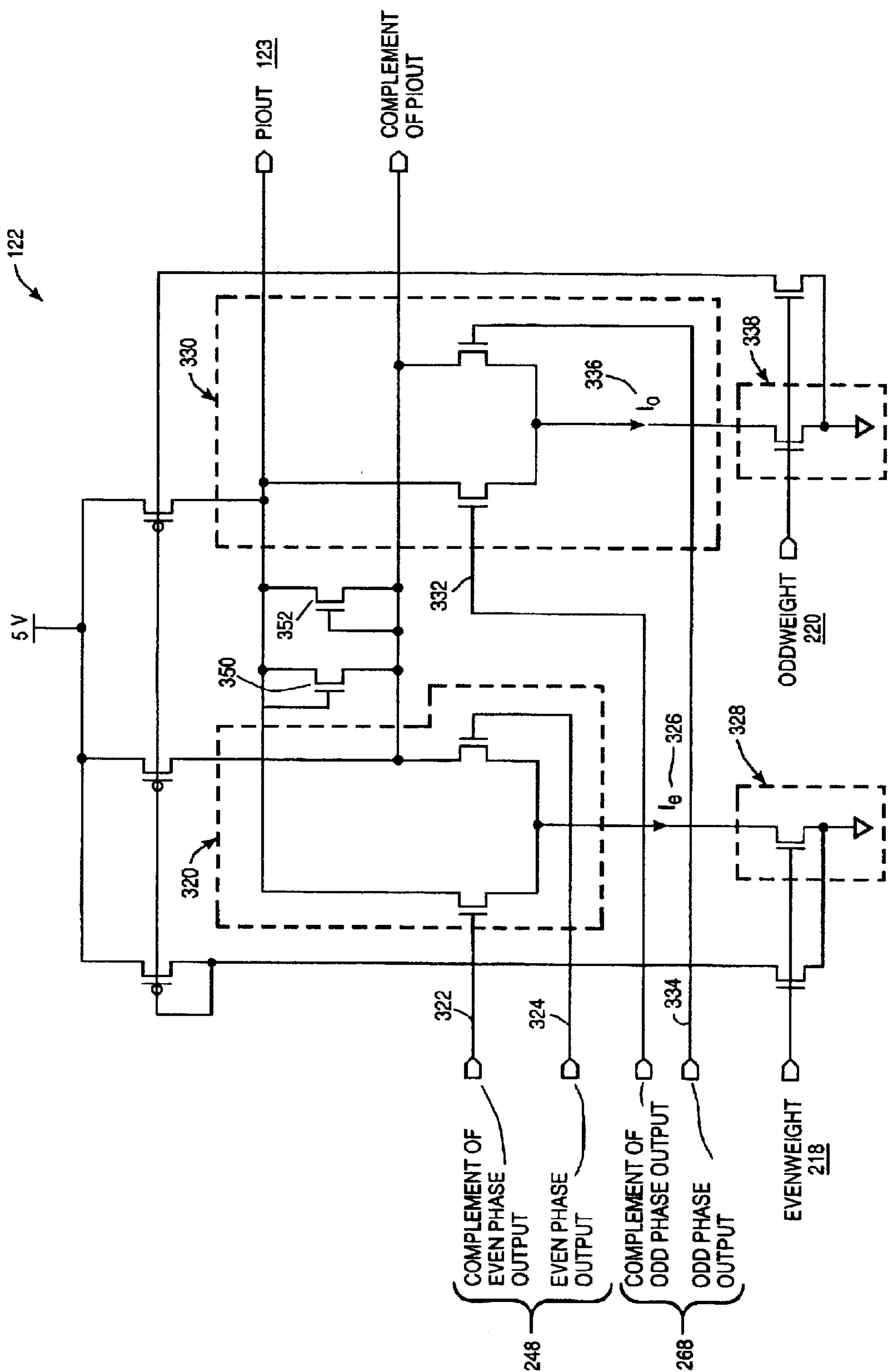


FIG. 11

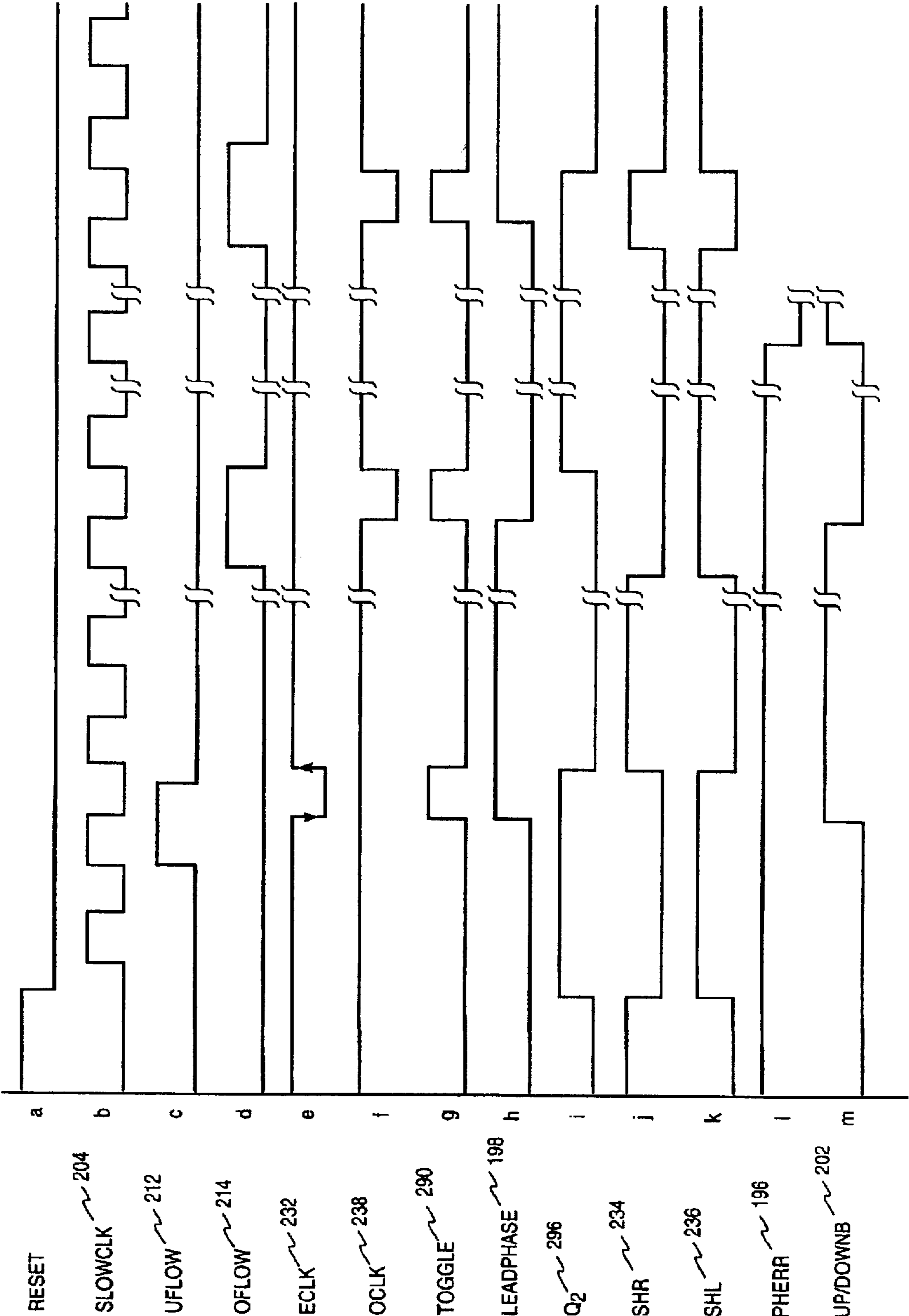
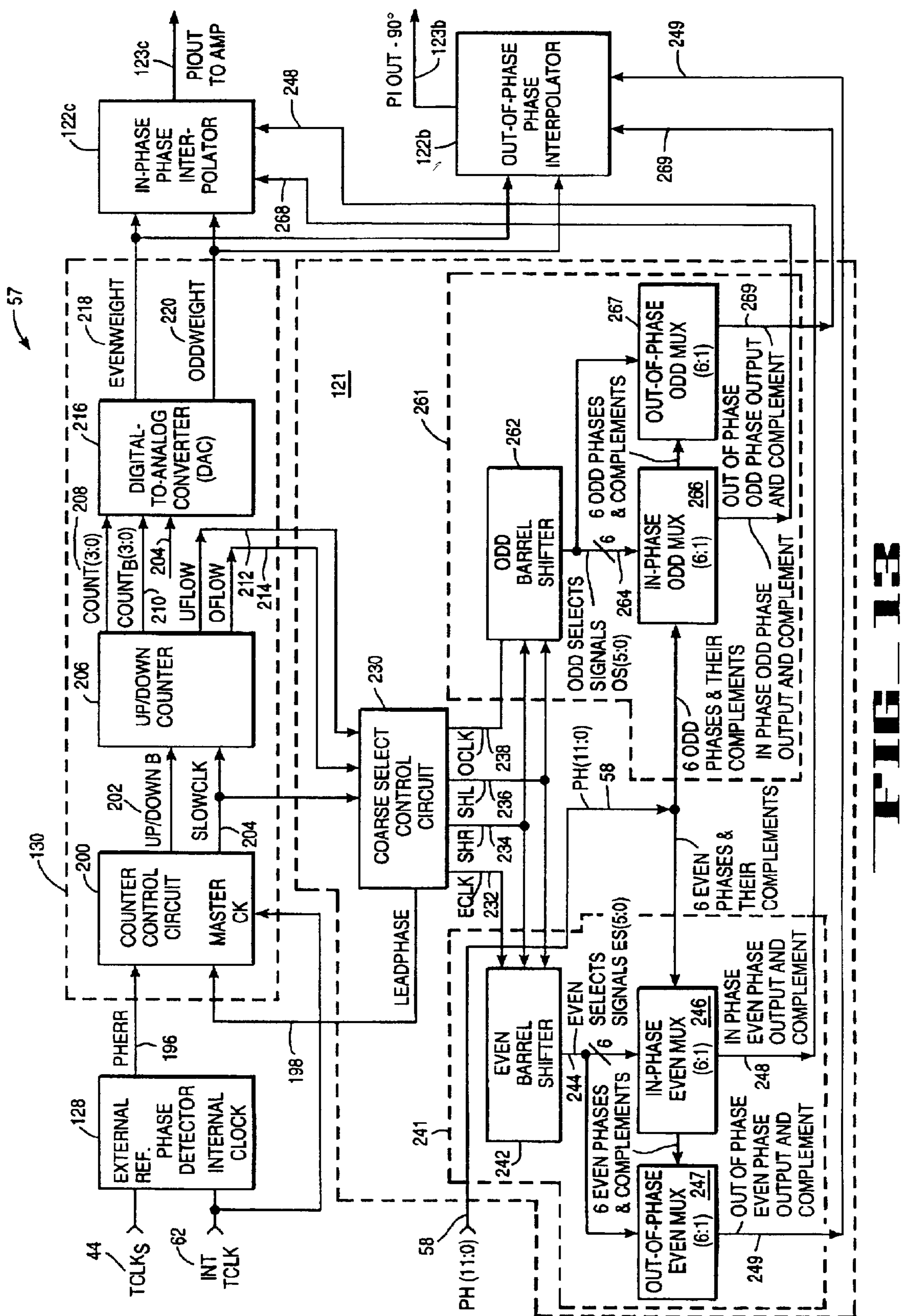


FIG. 12



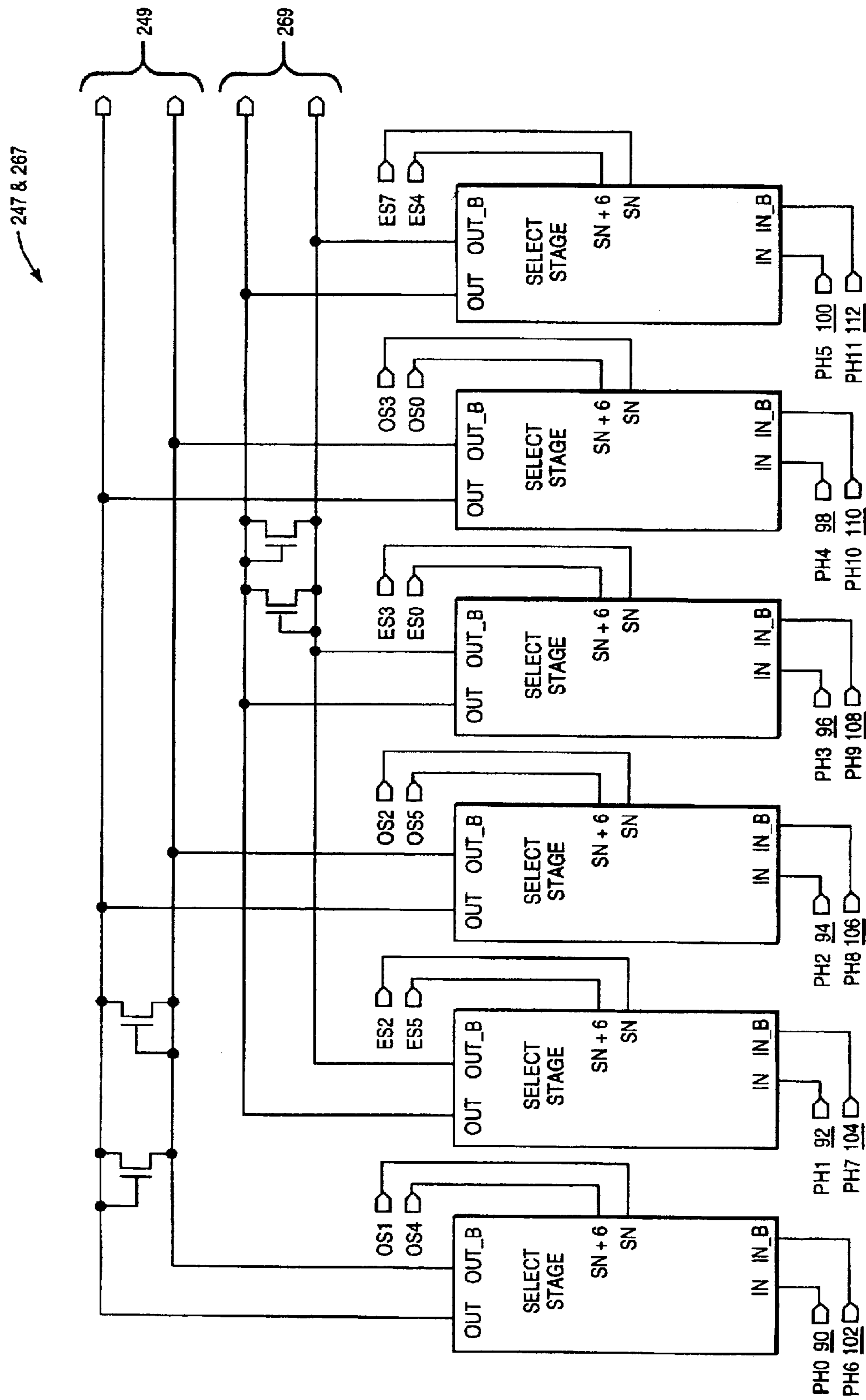


FIG. 14

DELAY STAGE CIRCUITRY FOR A RING OSCILLATOR

Matter enclosed in heavy brackets [] appears in the original patent but forms no part of this reissue specification; matter printed in italics indicates the additions made by reissue.

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application is a continuation of application Ser. No. 08/347,844, filed Dec. 1, 1994 (now U.S. Pat. No. 5,596,610), which is a continuation of application Ser. No. 08/161,769, filed Dec. 2, 1993 (now abandoned), which is a divisional of application Ser. No. 07/890,034, filed May 28, 1992 (now abandoned).

FIELD OF INVENTION

The present invention relates to clock synchronization circuitry including a cascaded phase locked loop. In particular the present invention relates to a delay stage for a ring oscillator and a fine phase tuning circuitry, both used in the cascaded phase locked loop.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Clock synchronization in integrated circuits is typically performed by a phase locked loop (PLL).

Some prior PLLs use a ring oscillator as a voltage controlled oscillator. A ring oscillator is a chain of inversion elements coupled together in a negative feedback fashion, with each element contributing a delay amount which adds up to half an oscillation period. Some prior phase locked loop implementations using ring oscillators suffer phase offset and deadband problems, which are difficult to minimize without compromising one or the other.

One disadvantage of prior ring oscillators is that the number of phase signals that can be generated are limited by the number of inversion elements contained in the ring oscillator. The number of inversion elements is, in turn, limited by the length of time delay contributed by each inversion element. The greater the time delay of the inversion element, the fewer the number of inversion elements that can be included in the ring oscillator.

Another disadvantage of some prior oscillators is that they must include an odd number of inversion elements to develop a phase shift of greater than 180°.

Other prior PLLs use voltage controlled delay line to generate the phase shift necessary for oscillation. Such prior PLLs have a limited delay range, typically a clock period or less. Hence, the frequency of operation of such prior PLLs is very limited. Prior PLLs including delay lines also tend to be susceptible to supply noise because of their use of CMOS inverters, which couple supply noise directly into output signals.

SUMMARY AND OBJECTS OF THE INVENTION

One object of the present invention is to provide a method and circuitry for synchronizing internal device functions to an external clock.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a method and circuitry for clock synchronization that allows phase deadband characteristics to be easily optimized.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a method and circuitry for clock synchronization that allows easy optimization of stability characteristics.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a method and circuitry for clock synchronization that minimizes the affect of the delay of clock buffers.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a method and circuitry for clock synchronization that minimizes the affect of a clock distribution network on loop stability.

A still further object of the present invention is to provide a method and circuitry for clock synchronization that allows easy optimization of loop bandwidth.

A further object of the present invention is to provide a method and circuitry for clock synchronization that provides high rejection of power supply noise.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a method and circuitry for fine phase adjustment with small static phase error and high loop stability.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a method and circuitry for phase adjustment in which there are no boundary conditions or start up conditions to be concerned with.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a method and circuitry for clock synchronization that provides smooth phase adjustment.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a method and circuitry for clock synchronization that is suitable for a wide range of frequencies.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a method and circuitry for clock synchronization that minimizes restart response time after power down.

Another object of the present invention is to provide a method and circuitry for clock synchronization that compensates for the delays associated with data input circuitry and data output circuitry.

A still further object of the present invention is to provide a method and circuitry for clock synchronization that generates an output signal with an controlled phase offset with respect to the input reference signal.

A method of performing phase adjustment in a phase locked loop is described. First, two phase signals are selected from a multiplicity of phase signals. The two selected phase signals are selected by a select signal. Next, an output signal is generated by interpolating between the two selected phase signals. The contribution of each of the two selected phase signals to the output signal is determined by a weighting signal.

Also described is phase tuning circuitry, which includes a phase selector and a phase interpolator. The phase selector selects two phase signals from a multiplicity of phase signals in response to a select signal. The two selected phase signals are coupled to the phase interpolator. The phase interpolator generates an output signal by interpolating between the two selected phase signals. The relative contribution of each of the two selected phase signals to the output signal is determined by a weighting signal.

Also described is a delay stage for a ring oscillator. The ring oscillator includes an even number of cascaded delay stages. Each delay stage includes a differential amplifier, which generates two complementary output signals. Coupled between the complementary output signals, two voltage clamping means limit the peak-to-peak voltage swing of the output signal. Limiting the peak-to-peak voltage swing of the output signal speeds-up the delay stage and allows the ring oscillator to include a greater number of delay stages.

Other objects, features, and advantages of the present invention will be apparent from the accompanying drawings and the detailed description that follows.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

The present invention is illustrated by way of example and not limitation in the figures of the accompanying drawings in which like references indicate similar elements and in which:

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a high speed computer bus.

FIG. 2 is a block diagram of a phase locked loop.

FIG. 3 is a block diagram of the VCO.

FIG. 4 is a diagram of the relationship between the external reference signal and the phase signals output by the VCO.

FIG. 5 is a schematic diagram of a delay stage of the VCO.

FIG. 6 is an illustration of the phase adjustment levels of the phase selection circuitry and the phase interpolator.

FIG. 7 is a detailed block diagram of the receive subloop within the phase locked loop.

FIG. 8 is a schematic diagram of the coarse select control circuit.

FIG. 9 is a block diagram of the even multiplexer and the odd multiplexer.

FIG. 10 is a schematic diagram of a multiplexer select stage.

FIG. 11 is a schematic diagram of the phase interpolator.

FIG. 12 is a timing diagram for a subloop of the phase locked loop.

FIG. 13 is a detailed block diagram of the transmit subloop within the phase locked loop.

FIG. 14 is a block diagram of the out-of-phase even multiplexer and the out-of-phase odd multiplexer.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

FIG. 1 is a block diagram of a high speed digital computer bus system 20. Devices 30 and 32 use clock synchronization circuitry 36 to synchronize the transfer of data between data bus 38. Clock synchronization circuitry 36 is a cascaded phase locked loop (PLL) 36. The main loop of PLL 36 utilizes a ring voltage controlled oscillator (VCO), which includes an even number of cascaded delay stages of the present invention. Two subloops coupled to the main loop perform fine phase tuning according to the method and circuitry of the present invention to generate two internal clock signals.

As will be described in more detail below, each delay stage of the present invention generates two complementary output signals using a differential amplifier. Coupled between the two complementary output signals, two clamping devices limit the peak-to-peak voltage swing of the complementary output signals. When the delay stages are cascaded together, they provide twelve different phase signals that are used by the subloops.

The method and circuitry for fine phase adjustment used in the subloops also will be described in detail below. Briefly described, the phase tuning circuitry of the present invention includes a phase selector and a phase interpolator. The phase selector selects an even phase signal and an odd phase signal from the twelve phase signals output by the VCO of the main loop. The even and odd phase signals are selected by an even select signal and an odd select signal, respectively. The phase interpolator interpolates between the even phase signal and the odd phase signal to generate an output signal. The effect of the even phase signal and the odd phase signal on the output signal is determined by an even weighting

signal and an odd weighting signal, respectively. The weighting signals allow even phase signals and odd phase signals to switch without introducing jitter onto the output signal.

The high speed digital computer bus system 20 of FIG. 1 includes master device 30, slave devices 32, only one of which is shown, and data bus 38. Data bus 38 transfers data between devices 30 and 32 at data rates up to 500 MBytes per second, in the preferred embodiment.

Master device 30 is an intelligent device, such as a microprocessor, an application specific integrated circuit (ASIC), a memory controller, or a graphics engine. Master 30 differs from slave device 32 in that master device 30 initiates data requests, such as requests to read or write slave devices 32.

Slave devices 32 do not include as much intelligence as master device 30 and can only respond to data requests. Slave devices 32 may be dynamic random access memories (DRAMs), static random access memories (SRAMs), read only memories (ROMs), electrically programmable read only memories (EPROMs), or flash memories.

Master device 30 and slave devices 32 transfer data synchronously. That is, data transfers are referenced to the clock edges of clock signals CLOCKFROMMASTER 42 and CLOCKTOMASTER 44. Both clock signals 42 and 44 are generated by clock source 46. Both clock signals 42 and 44 are carried by a single clockline, which turns around near master device 30. From there, the clockline extends back toward clock source 46, where it is terminated. As a result, both CLOCKFROMMASTER 42 and CLOCKTOMASTER 44 run at the same frequency. The phase shift between clock signals 42 and 44 varies depending upon the location of devices 30 and 32 relative to the turnaround in the clockline. The phase difference between clock signals 42 and 44 is approximately 0° near the turnaround and increases as distance from the turnaround increases.

Slave devices 32 transmit data with the edges of CLOCKTOMASTER 44 and receive data with CLOCKFROMMASTER 42. Analogously, master device 30 transmits data with the edges of CLOCKFROMMASTER 42 and receives data with CLOCKTOMASTER 44. Clock and data signals remain synchronized as they propagate toward their destination because clock lines 42 and 44 and data bus 38 are matched for delay.

Devices 30 and 32 interface with data bus 38 and clock signals 42 and 44 using interface 34. Interface 34 performs a number of tasks. Among those tasks, interface 34 converts the low voltage levels of data bus 38 to ordinary CMOS levels. Interface 34 also generates internal clocks for receiving and transmitting data. Interface 34 uses clock synchronization circuitry 36 to perform voltage level conversion and clock synchronization.

FIG. 2 illustrates in block diagram form clock synchronization circuitry 36 that is the heart of interface 34. Phase locked loop 36 synchronizes the reception of data to the device's external receive clock, CLOCKTOMASTER 44 or CLOCKFROMMASTER 42, as the case may be. Similarly, phase locked loop 36 synchronizes the transmission of data with the device's external transmit clock, CLOCKTOMASTER 44 or CLOCKFROMMASTER 42, as the case may be.

Phase locked loop 36 performs both synchronization tasks using a cascaded design, which includes main loop 52 and two subloops, a receive subloop 54 and a transmit subloop 56. Main loop 52 acquires and tracks frequency, outputting 12 phase signals, PH(11:0) 58, all with the same frequency, to subloops 54 and 56. Subloops 54 and 56 perform fine

phase tracking of clock signals **42** and **44** by selecting two phase signals from PH(11:0) **58**. The two selected phase signals are interpolated to generate internal receive and transmit clock signals, INTRCLK **60**, INTTCLK **62**, and LEADING INTTCLK **63**. INTRCLK **60** is in-phase with external receive clock **42**. INTTCLK **62** is also in phase with its external reference clock signal, TCLK_S **44**. In contrast, LEADING INTTCLK **63** leads TCLK_S **44** by 90° in a preferred embodiment.

Main loop **52** uses a conventional second order architecture to track and acquire signal frequencies ranging from 50 MHz to 250 MHz. Main loop **52** has a short pull in time of less than 10 usec. The amount of static phase error generated by main loop **52** has no affect upon the phase tracking accuracy of PLL **36** because subloops **54** and **56** perform phase acquisition. Thus, static phase error in main loop **52** may be, and is, traded for reduced deadband and improved stability characteristics. In contrast, the jitter of phase signals PH(11:0) **58** is minimized because it directly affects the jitter within subloops **54** and **56**.

Optimization of the stability of phase signals PH(11:0) **58** is further aided by the cascaded design of PLL **36**. Clock distribution and buffering is performed by subloops **54** and **56**, rather than main loop **52**. Thus, main loop stability is unaffected by buffer and clock distribution delay. Consequently, main loop bandwidth may be easily optimized and the size of filter **84** reduced. This is particularly important in embodiments in which filter **84** and all of PLL **36** is fabricated on a single die.

Main loop **52** includes amplifiers **74** and **76**, counters **78**, frequency-phase detector (FPD) **80**, charge pump **82**, filter **84**, and voltage controlled oscillator (VCO) **86**.

Amplifier **74** amplifies RCLK_S to a voltage swing of 0 volts to 5 volts, as required by FPD **80**. Amplifier **76** similarly amplifies PH0 **90** to a voltage swing of 0 volts to 5 volts. The gain of amplifiers **74** and **76** necessarily differ because the voltage swings of RCLK_S and PH0 **90** differ. This difference in amplification prior to frequency and phase detection by FPD **80** introduces static phase error into main loop **52**. The static phase error so introduced is tolerable because it does not affect the phase tuning of subloops **54** and **56**.

Preferred implementations of phase locked loop **36** include counters **78** to increase the frequency range of PLL **36**. Counters **78** divide the frequency of their inputs by two, prior to coupling their outputs to FPD **80**. Counters **78** thus enhance the frequency response of FPD **80** by expanding the range of frequencies that FPD **80** can accommodate.

FPD **80** is a sequential frequency detector, selected for its large tracking range and short pull-in time.

Charge pump **82** converts the output of FPD **80** into current pulses. Charge pump **82** eliminates deadband with its high input sensitivity. Charge pump **82** introduces static phase error because its mechanisms for switching from a high-to-low output and from a low-to-high output are not symmetrical. This static phase error is tolerable because main loop **52** does not perform phase tuning. Thus, charge pump **82** may, and does, differ from prior charge pumps because within main loop **52** dead band characteristics may be reduced without concern for static phase error.

Filter **84** converts the current pulses into the analog control voltage **85** coupled to VCO **86** using a standard one-pole, one zero, passive filter.

VCO **86** is a six delay stage ring oscillator. Each delay stage generates two of the twelve phase signals. PH(11:0) **58**. The differential design of the VCO stage provides high power-supply rejection (PSR), as well as complementary outputs.

FIG. **3** illustrates in block diagram form ring voltage controlled oscillator **86**. VCO **86** varies from previous ring oscillators in two respects. First, VCO **86** includes an even number of delay stages **140**. VCO **86** is able to generate 180° phase shift with an even number of delay stages **140** because each delay stage **140** generates two complementary outputs that are appropriately coupled to the next delay stage. Second, VCO **86** includes a greater number of delay stages than normal. VCO **86** is able to include more delay stages because each delay stage **140** contributes less delay than prior delay stages.

Each delay stage **140a–140f** of VCO **86** generates two pairs of complementary output signals, OUT and OUTB, and CK and CKB. CK and CKB are buffered, level shifted versions of OUT and OUTB. Thus, CK and CKB have the same voltage swings and frequencies as OUT and OUTB. The buffering of CK and CKB prevents their loading from affecting the stability of VCO **86**.

Delay stages **140a–140f** are coupled together via OUT and OUTB so that the entire phase shift from the input of delay stage **140a** to the output of delay stage **140f** is greater than or equal to 180° at the oscillation frequency. Outputs OUT of delay stages **140a–140e** are coupled together to the INB inputs of the next delay stage **140b–140f**. Outputs OUTB of delay stages **140a–140e** are coupled to inputs IN of delay stages **140b–140f**. Only the coupling between delay stages **140f** and **140a** varies from this pattern.

Outputs CK and CKB of each stage **140a–140f** are coupled to subloops **54** and **56** as two of the twelve phases **58** output by VCO **86**.

Control voltage, V_c **85**, controls the frequency at which each delay stage **140a–140f** switches via bias voltage, V_{BN} **160**. V_c **85** can vary between 3.5 volts to 0 volts, giving VCO **86** a wide locking range, V_c **85** also ensures that phase signals PH(11:0) **58** have a symmetrical voltage swing via bias voltage, V_{BP} **162**.

FIG. **4** illustrates the relationship between the twelve phase signals **58** generated by VCO **86**. When PLL **36** is in lock PH0 **90** should be in-phase with reference signal, RCLK_S, except for the static phase error contributed by amplifiers **74** and **76**, and charge pump **82**. The remaining phases, PH(11:1) **58**, are evenly spaced across the clock period of RCLK_S.

The first stage of VCO **86**, delay stage **140a**, output PH0 **90** and PH6 **102**. These signals may be referred to as PH0 and its complement or PH6 and its complement.

The second delay stage **140b** generates PH1 **92** and PH7 **104**. These signals are also referred to as PH1 and its complement or PH7 and its complement.

PH2 **94** and PH8 **106** are the outputs of the delay stage **140c**. These signals are also referred to as PH2 and its complement or PH8 and its complement.

Complementary phase signals PH3 **96** and PH9 **108** are generated by delay stage **140d**.

The fifth delay stage **140e** generates the complementary phase signals PH4 **98** and PH10 **110**.

Delay stage **140f** generates PH5 **100** and PH11 **112**. These signals are also referred to as PH5 and its complement or PH11 and its complement.

FIG. **5** is a schematic diagram of a delay stage **140** within VCO **86**. Delay stage **140** includes differential amplifier **164**, current source **166**, and source follower buffer **168**.

The delay time of delay stage **140** is controlled by bias current I_B **181**. Varying I_B **181** varies the delay time of delay stage **140**. Bias current I_B **181** is, in turn, controlled by bias

voltage, V_{BN} 160. The delay time of delay stage 140 is smallest when V_{BN} is at its maximum level of 3.5 volts.

Another factor contributes to the relatively small delay time of delay stage 140. Unlike prior delay stages, the voltage swing of OUT and OUTB and CK and CKB is limited. This increases the frequency range of delay stage 140, allowing it to operate at higher frequencies.

Limiting the voltage swing of OUT and OUTB and CK and CKB also increases power supply rejection (PSR) by preventing transistors 186, 188 and 167 from entering deeply into their linear region of operation and keeping their output resistance relatively high.

The biasing of transistors 186 and 188 is controlled by V_{BP} 162. The bias generator for V_{BP} 162 (not shown) uses a simple current mirror design. More complex bias generators, which include common-mode feedback, could be used to set V_{BP} 162 such that the desired voltage level is maintained at OUT and OUTB.

The voltage swing between OUT and OUTB is limited to approximately 1.5 volts peak-to-peak by transistors 190 and 192. Transistors 190 and 192 are coupled in diode fashion between OUT and OUTB, thus clamping the peak-to-peak voltage swing.

The range of possible voltage levels for OUT and OUTB is 4.5 volts to 3.0 volts. This is illustrated by the two waveforms in the upper right corner of FIG. 5. The range of voltage levels for CK and CKB is 3.3 volts to 1.8 volts. This is illustrated by the two waveforms in the lower right corner of FIG. 5.

The symmetrical shape of CK, CKB, OUT and OUTB results because I_C 180 is approximately equal to $2 \times I_B$ 181. Setting the common mode voltage level of OUT and OUTB near 3.75 V prevents node 183 from going to ground. As a result, the output impedance of current source 166 remains high, keeping the VCO common mode rejection of power supply noise high.

Referring once again to FIG. 2, consider now subloops 54 and 56. Subloop 54 is a single first order loop. Subloop 56, in contrast to subloop 54, includes two first order loops. One loop is closed and is used to generate the in phase internal transmit clock, INTTCLK 62. This closed loop is essentially identical to subloop 54, varying only in its input signal and output signal. The second loop within subloop 56 operates open loop, generating the leading internal transmit clock LEADING INTTCLK 63. The amount of phase by which LEADING INTTCLK 63 leads INTTCLK 62 is fixed, but selectable, as will be described in detail below.

For simplicity's sake, subloop 54 will be described in detail first. Aided by that discussion, subloop 56 will then be described.

Subloop 54 performs phase tuning using the 12 phase signals generated by VCO 86, PH(11:0) 58. The heart of subloop 54 is phase select circuitry 120 and phase interpolator 122a. Phase select circuitry 120 performs coarse phase adjustment by selecting as outputs an even phase signal and an odd phase signal from PH(11:0) 58. Even phase signals are PH0 90, PH2 94, PH4 98, PH6 102, PH8 106, and PH10 110. Odd phase signals are PH1 92, PH3 96, PH5 100, PH7 104, PH9 108, and PH11 112. Normally, the selected odd phase signal and the selected even phase signal will be adjacent to each other. For example, PH3 96 is adjacent to even phases PH2 94 and PH4 98. Phase interpolator 122a generates a signal that lies between the selected odd phase signal and the selected even phase signal. Phase interpolator 122a can generate 16 discrete values between the two selected phase signals using an even weighting signal and an odd weighting signal.

FIG. 6 illustrates the phase adjustment levels of phase selection circuitry 120 and phase interpolator 122. The inputs to phase select circuitry 120, PH(11:0) 58, are represented by 12 horizontal lines, which are vertically evenly spaced apart. These lines represent twelve coarse adjustment levels across the period of the external reference clock; e.g., $RCLK_S$. These twelve levels are further subdivided by phase interpolator 122, which generates 16 fine adjustment levels between each coarse adjustment level. Thus, the clock period is divided into 12×16 , or 192, phase divisions.

Referring once again to FIG. 2, amplifier 124a amplifies the output of phase interpolator 122a and passes it on to clock buffer 126a. Clock buffer 126a then distributes INTRCLK 60 throughout the device, 30 or 32.

Phase detector 128 compares the internal clock signal, INTTCLK 60 to the external reference, $RCLK_S$ 42, and indicates the polarity of the phase error to accumulator circuitry 130.

In one embodiment phase detector 128 is a latch. Phase detector 128 is preferably the same type of latch used by the data input circuitry of interface 34, which allows subloop 54 to compensate for the delay caused by data input circuitry. Preferably, internal receive clock, INTRCLK 60, is feedback to the latch's clock input and the reference signal, $RCLK_S$ 42, is coupled to the latch's data input. Thus, INTRCLK 60 determines the time at which $RCLK_S$ 42 is sampled. When subloop 54 is in lock, phase detector 128 outputs a stuttering string of logical 1s and 0s. Phase detector 128 outputs a logic 1 when the low-to-high transition of INTRCLK 60 occurs before the low-to-high transition of $RCLK_S$ 42. Conversely, phase detector 128 outputs a logic 0 when the low-to-high transition of INTRCLK 60 occurs after the low-to-high transition of $RCLK_S$ 42.

Accumulator circuitry 130 uses the output of phase detector 128 to control both phase select circuitry 120 and phase interpolator 122. In other words, accumulator circuitry 130 controls both coarse and fine phase adjustment.

The cooperation between accumulator circuitry 130, phase select circuitry 120, and phase interpolator 122 can be understood in greater detail with reference to FIG. 7. FIG. 7 illustrates portion 55 of subloop 54.

Accumulator circuitry 130 responds to two input signals, PHERR 196 and LEADPHASE 198. PHERR 196 is the output of phase detector 128 and as such indicates the polarity of the phase error between the internal clock and the external clock. PHERR 196 indicates that the internal clock lags the external clock with a logic 1. With a logic 0 PHERR 196 indicates the internal clock leads the external clock. LEADPHASE 198 indicates whether the leading phase signal selected by phase select circuitry 122 is even or odd. LEADPHASE 198 is a logic 0 when the leading phase is even and a logic 1 when the leading phase is odd. For example, when phase select circuitry 122 selects PH3 and PH4 as its outputs LEADPHASE is a logic 1. LEADPHASE 198 is likewise a logic 1 when phase select circuitry 122 selects PH11 and PH0. Conversely, LEADPHASE 198 is a logic 0 when PH6 and PH7 are selected.

Counter control circuit 200 exclusively NORs PHERR 196 and LEADPHASE 198 together to generate UP/DOWNB signal 202. UP/DOWNB 202 controls up/down counter 206. When UP/DOWNB 202 is a logic 1 up/down counter 206 counts up. Up/down counter 206 counts down when UP/DOWNB 202 is a logic 0.

Counter control circuit 200 also generates an internal clock signal 204 to synchronize the operation of subloop 54. Counter control circuit 200 divides down the clock gener-

ated by subloop 54, INTRCLK 60, to generate SLOWCLK 204. In the preferred embodiment, counter control circuit 200 divides INTRCLK 60 by 16.

Up/down counter 206 generates a number of signals, 208, 210, 212, and 214, in response to UP/DOWNB 202. These signals, 208, 210, 212, and 214, control phase select circuitry 120 and phase interpolator 122. Up/down counter 206 represents the value of its count via COUNT(3:0) 208. The sixteen levels of fine phase adjustment of phase interpolator 122 result from the resolution of COUNT(3:0) 208 and its complement, COUNTB(3:0) 210. Up/down counter 206 outputs two other signals, OFLOW 214 and UFLOW 212. Overflow signal, OFLOW 214, goes active high when up/down counter 206 is requested to increment COUNT(3:0) 208 above its maximum value; i.e., 15. Analogously, underflow signal, UFLOW 212, goes active high when up/down counter 206 is requested to decrement COUNT(3:0) 208 below its minimum value; i.e., 0. UFLOW 212 and OFLOW 214 control phase select circuitry 120.

Digital-to-analog converter (DAC) 216 converts COUNT(3:0) 208 into an analog signal to generate EVENWEIGHT 218. Similarly, COUNTB(3:0) 210 is converted into an analog signal to generate ODDWEIGHT 220. Phase interpolator 122 determines the weighting of odd and phase select signals in response to EVENWEIGHT 218 and ODDWEIGHT 220.

Phase select circuitry 120 includes coarse select control circuit 230, which controls even phase select circuit 240 and odd phase select circuit 260. Coarse select control circuit 230 clocks even phase select circuit 240 using even clock signal, ECLK 232. The operation of even phase select circuit 240 is controlled by shift right and shift left signals, SHR 234 and SHL 236, SHR 234 and SHL 236 also control odd phase select circuit 260. Coarse select control circuit 230 generates a unique clock signal, OCLK 238, to clock odd phase select circuit 260.

While tuning up or down through phase PH(b 11:0) 58, coarse select control circuit 230 alternately brings active OCLK 238 and ECLK 232. This alternating action derives from the alternating action of UFLOW 212 and OFLOW 214.

The relationship between UFLOW 212, OFLOW 214, OCLK 238, and ECLK 232 can be understood in greater detail with reference to FIG. 8. FIG. 8 illustrates coarse select control circuit 230.

Shift clocks OCLK 238 and ECLK 232 are generated using NOR gate 280, and NAND gates 282 and 284. RESET 286 and SLOWCLK 204 are NORed together by gate 280. The output of NOR gate 280, signal 281, is generally an inverted version of SLOWCLK 204, except when RESET 286 is active high. Signal 281 is coupled to gates 282. NAND gate 282 combines signal 281 and UFLOW 212 to generate ECLK 232. Similarly, NAND gate 284 combines signal 281 and OFLOW 214 to generate OCLK 238.

LEADPHASE 198, SHR 234, and SHL 236 are generated using NAND gate 288 and toggle flip-flops [290] 292 and [292] 294. NAND gate 288 combines OCLK 238 and ECLK 232 to generate TOGGLE 290. TOGGLE 290 is coupled to the T input of toggle flip-flop 292, which outputs LEADPHASE 198. Toggle flip-flop 292 resets LEADPHASE 198 to a logic zero when RESET 286 is active high.

TOGGLE [292] 290 is inverted and then coupled to toggle flip-flop 294. Toggle flip-flop 294 couples its output 296 to EX-NOR gate 298, which exclusively NORs output 296 with OFLOW 214. SHL 236 is an inverted version of the output of EX-NOR gate 298 and SHR 234.

Referring again to FIG. 7, consider the influence of coarse select control circuit 230 upon circuits 240 and 260. Even phase select circuit 240 includes a barrel shifter 242 and an analog 6-to-1 multiplexer 246. Even barrel shifter 242 generates six even select signals, ES(5:0) 244, for even multiplexer 246. Even select signals 244 are digital signals. Barrel shifter 242 brings only one of the six even select signals 244 active high at a time. This is because barrel shifter 242 is initially loaded with a value of 1. Which of the six even select signals is active depends upon the previous state of barrel shifter 246 and the states of SHR 234 and SHL 236.

From its inputs 58, even multiplexer 246 selects one of the six even phase signals using even select signals, ES(5:0) 244. Even multiplexer 246 associates one even select signal with one even phase signal. As a result, even multiplexer 246 selects as even phase output signal 248 the single even phase signal associated with an active even select signal.

Like even phase select circuit 240, odd phase select circuit 260 includes a barrel shifter 262 and an analog 6:1 multiplexer 266. Odd select circuit 260 differs from even phase select circuit 240 only in its input and output signals. In other words, odd phase select circuit 260 functions like even phase select circuit 240.

FIG. 9 is a block diagram of a preferred embodiment of even multiplexer 246 and odd multiplexer 266. For simplicity's sake, the pull-up circuitry associated with multiplexer 246 and odd multiplexer 266 has been omitted. Each multiplexer 246 and 266 uses three identical multiplexer select stages 300.

Even phase multiplexer 246 includes three select stages 300a, 300c, and 300e. Each even select stage 300a, 300c and 300e receives two complementary even phase signals, and two even select signals. Using these input signals, each even select stage 300a, 300c, and 300e generate two complementary outputs, OUT 302a, 302c, and 302e and OUTB 304a, 304c, and 304e. All three OUT signals 302a, 302c, and 302e are tied together and coupled to phase interpolator 122 as the even phase output signal. Similarly, all three OUTB signals 304a, 304c, and 304e are tied together and coupled to phase interpolator 122 as the complement of the even phase output signal. To minimize propagation delay and maximize power supply rejection, the voltage swing of the even phase output signal and its complement 248 are clamped by transistors 310 and 312, which are coupled in diode fashion between the outputs of delay stages 300a, 300c, and 300e.

Odd multiplexer 266 mirrors the design of even multiplexer 246. Odd multiplexer includes three select stages 300b, 300d, and 300f. Each odd select stage 300b, 300d, and 300f receives two complementary odd phase signals, and two odd select signals. Using these input signals, each odd select stage generates two complementary outputs, OUT 302b, 302d, and 302f and OUTB 304b, 304d, and 304f. All three OUT signals 302b, 302d, and 302f are tied together and coupled to phase interpolator 122 as the odd phase output signal. Similarly, all three OUTB signals 304b, 304d, and 304f are tied together and coupled to phase interpolator 122 as the complement of the odd phase output signal. The peak-to-peak voltage swing of odd phase output signal and its complement 268 is clamped by transistors 314 and 316, which are coupled between the two signal lines in diode fashion.

The operation of multiplexers 246 and 266 can be understood in greater detail with reference to FIG. 10. FIG. 10 illustrates schematically a single multiplexer select stage 300.

Multiplexer select stage **300** performs its function using buffering stage **301** and differential amplifiers **303** and **305**. Buffering stage **301** buffers and shifts the voltage levels of input signals **IN** and **INB**. The outputs of buffering stage **301**, **IN'** and **INB'**, are then coupled to differential amplifiers **303** and **305**. The selected differential amplifier, **303** or **305**, then couples the appropriate input signals to **OUT** and **OUTB**.

The operation of multiplexer select stage **300** is controlled by the select signals coupled to **SN** and **SN+6**. The active signal of the pair of select signals, **SN** or **SN+6**, performs two functions. First, the active select signal enables buffering stage **301**. Second, the active select signal turns on one of the two differential amplifiers **303** and **305**.

The enabling of buffering stage **301** is achieved via four transistors **307**, **309**, **311**, and **313** near the top of buffering stage **301**. Two transistors, **307** and **309**, are coupled to amplifier **315**. Similarly, transistors **311** and **313** are coupled to amplifier **317**. Transistors **307** and **311** are turned on and off by an inverted version of **SN**, **SN_B**. An inverted version of **SN+6**, **SN+6_B**, turns transistors **309** and **315** on and off.

Consider the operation of buffering stage **301** when one of the select inputs, **SN** or **SN+6**, is active. For example assume **SN** is active high. **SN_B** places a low voltage on the gates of transistors **307** and **311**, causing them to conduct. Amplifiers **315** and **317** responds by coupling level shift versions of **IN** and **IN_B**, **IN'** and **IN_B'** to the inputs of differential amplifiers **303** and **305**. Buffering stage **301** responds nearly identically to an active select signal on **SN+6**. In this case, transistors **309** and **313** conduct, rather than transistors **307** and **311**.

Each differential amplifier **303** and **305** is controlled by a single select signal **SN** and **SN+6**. Thus, only one differential amplifier at a time drives **OUT** and **OUT_B**.

Both differential amplifiers are enabled via their current sources **319** and **321**. For example, when active high, **SN** turns current source **319** on. Differential amplifier **303** responds by coupling **IN'** and **OUT** and **IN_B'** and **OUTB**. Similarly, active **SN+6** turns on current source **321**. In response, differential amplifier **305** couples **IN_B'** to **OUT** and **IN'** to **OUT_B**.

Referring yet again to FIG. 7, consider now the influence of phase selector **120** upon phase interpolator **122**. Phase interpolator **122** performs fine phase tuning by interpolating between its inputs, even phase output signals **248** and odd output signals **268**. The relative contribution of these input signals **248** and **268** to signal **PIOUT 123** is determined by weighting signals, **EVENWEIGHT 218** and **ODDWEIGHT 220**.

The manner in which phase interpolator **122** generates **PIOUT 123** can be understood in greater detail with reference to the schematic diagram of FIG. 11. Even phase output signal and its complement **248** are weighted by differential amplifier **320**. Even phase output signal is coupled to one of the inputs **322** of differential amplifier **320**, while the complement of the even phase output signal is coupled to the other input **324** of differential amplifier **320**. The amplification of signals **248** is determined by I_E **326**, the current generated by current source **328**. **EVENWEIGHT 218** controls the magnitude of I_E **326**, thus controlling the contribution of signals **248** to **PIOUT 123**. As **EVENWEIGHT 218** decreases in voltage level, the contribution of even phase output signals **248** to **PIOUT 123** also decreases, and vice-versa.

Similarly, differential amplifier **330** weights odd phase output signals **268**. One signal is coupled to input **332** and

the other is coupled to input **334**. The current generated by current source **338**, I_O **336**, determines the amplification of odd phase output signals **268**. **ODDWEIGHT 220**, the input to current source **338**, controls the magnitude of I_O **336** and thus the amplification of odd phase output signals **268**. The amplification of odd phase output signals **268** decreases and increases directly with the voltage level of **ODDWEIGHT 220**.

The outputs of differential amplifiers **320** and **330** are summed together by coupling their outputs together. The peak-to-peak voltage swing of the outputs of differential amplifiers **320** and **330** are clamped by transistors **350** and **352** to minimize propagation delay and maximize power supply rejection. The voltage swings of **PIOUT 123** and its complement could also be clamped by other means, such as diodes.

Armed with an understanding of the architecture of sub-loop **54**, consider its operation while locking on **RCLK_S 42**. Assume that the phase of **RCLK_S 42** is initially some value between **PH2 94** and **PH3 96**. FIG. 12 illustrates the response of subloop **54** under these circumstances.

Active **RESET 286** forces even barrel shifter **242** to output a value of 000001 (binary) as even select signals, **ES(5:0) 244**. Even multiplexer **246** responds to **ES(5:0) 244** by coupling **PH0 90** and its complement, **PH6 102**, to phase interpolator **122**. Active **RESET 286** also forces odd select signals, **OS(5:0) 264**, to 000001 (binary). Odd multiplexer **266** responds by selecting **PH1 92** and its complement, **PH7 104**, as its outputs **268**.

Active **RESET 286** may also be used to force the outputs **208**, **210**, **212**, and **214** of up/down counter **206** to known states, though this is not necessary. If **RESET 286** does not control these signals they may begin in any state upon power up. In either case, for purposes of illustration, assume that **COUNT(3:0) 208** begins at 0000 (binary) and **COUNTB(3:0) 210** begins at 1111 (binary). Also assume that both **UFLOW 212** and **OFLOW 214** start up their inactive state. Thus, **EVENWEIGHT 218** is at its minimum value and **ODDWEIGHT 220** is at its maximum value.

Phase interpolator **122** responds to its input signals **218**, **220**, **248**, and **268** by bringing **PIOUT 123** in-phase with **PH1 92**. Thus, the output of subloop **54**, **INTRCLK 60**, is also in-phase with **PH1 92**.

Phase detector **128** responds to **INTRCLK 60** lagging **RCLK_S 42** by forcing **PHERR 196** to a logic 0.

Counter control circuit **200** exclusively **NORes** **PHERR 96** with **LEADPHASE 198**, which has had no opportunity to change from its reset value. Active **RESET 286** forces **LEADPHASE 198** to a logic low. Thus, counter control circuit **200** forces **UP/DOWNB 202** to a logic low.

Up/down counter **206** responds to the command to count down from **UP/DOWNB 202** by underflowing; i.e., bringing underflow signal **UFLOW 212** active high. The values of **COUNT(3:0) 208** and **COUNTB(3:0) 210** remain unchanged.

Coarse select control circuit **230** pulses active even shift clock, **ECLK 232**. On the active edge of **ECLK 232**, **SHL 236** goes active high. Even barrel shifter **242** shifts left in response, forcing even select signals **ES(5:0) 244** to change to 000010 (binary). Even multiplexer **246** is forced to switch its selection from **PH0 90** to **PH2 94** by the new value of even select signals **244**.

Phase interpolator **122** is not immediately affected by the switching of even phase output signals **248**. **EVENWEIGHT 218** remains at its minimum value after even multiplexer

246 changes its selection, preventing even phase output signals 248 from contributing to P_{IOUT} 123. Thus, phase interpolator 122 glitchlessly switches from an output generated by one pair of phase signals, PH0 90 and PH1 92, to an output generated by another pair of phase signals, PH1 92 and PH2 94.

It is not long the case that the even phase output signals 248 do not contribute to P_{IOUT} 123. LEADPHASE 198 changes state with ECLK 232. LEADPHASE 198 now indicates that odd phase output signal is the lower of the two selected phase signals coupled to phase interpolator 122. Counter control circuit 200 responds to this change in LEADPHASE 198. PHERR 196 remains high, thus counter control circuit 200 forces UP/DOWNB 202 high. Up/down counter 206 begins counting up, increasing the value of COUNT(3:0) 208 and decreasing the value of COUNTB(3:0) 210. As up/down counter 206 counts up, phase interpolator 122 gradually tunes P_{IOUT} 123 from phase alignment with PH1 92 to phase alignment with PH2 94. That occurs when COUNT(3:0) 208 reaches its maximum value of COUNTB(3:0) 210 reaches its minimum value.

INTRCLK 60, in phase with PH2 94, continues to lag RCLK_s 42, which has a phase somewhere between PH2 94 and PH3 96. Phase detector 128 therefore maintains PHERR 196 at a logic 1. Consequently, counter control circuit 202 continues to request that up/down counter 206 increase COUNT(3:0) 208 until up/down counter 206 overflows, bringing OFLOW 214 active high.

Active OFLOW 214 pulses active odd shift clock, OCLK 238. On the active edge of OCLK 238, SHL 236 goes active high, forcing odd barrel shifter 262 to shift left. Odd select signals, OS(5:0) 264, select PH3 96 with a value of 000010 (binary).

The switching by odd phase output signal 268 does not affect P_{IOUT} 123 because COUNTB(3:0) is 0000 (binary) during overflow conditions. Thus, ODDWEIGHT 220 prevents odd phase output signal 268 from contributing to P_{IOUT} 123. Once again, phase interpolator 122 glitchlessly switches from an output generated from one pair of phase signals, PH1 92 and PH2 94, to an output generated by another pair of phase signals, PH2 94 and PH3 96.

Soon after odd multiplexer 268 changes its selection, ODDWEIGHT 220 begins to increase in value and to affect P_{IOUT} 123. This gradual change begins when LEADPHASE 198 changes state with OCLK 238. Afterward, LEADPHASE 198 indicates that the low phase signal is even phase output signal 248. PHERR 196 remains high, thus counter control circuit 200 responds to LEADPHASE 198 by forcing UP/DOWNB 202 low. Up/down counter 206 begins counting down, decreasing the value of COUNT(3:0) 208 and increasing the value of COUNTB(3:0) 210. As up/down counter 206 counts down, phase interpolator 122 gradually tunes P_{IOUT} 123 into near phase alignment with RCLK_s 42. When that occurs, PHERR 96 stutters between a logic 1 and a logic 0. Up/down counter 206 responds by see-sawing COUNT(3:0) 208 between two consecutive binary values, and may underflow or overflow, allowing even select signals 248 and odd select signals 268 to change without causing glitches on P_{IOUT} 123.

Subloop 54 is not only capable of turning up through PH(11:0) 58 to lock on RCLK_s 42. Subloop 54 tunes down when necessary. For example, consider the situation when RCLK_s 42 changes phase after subloop 54 has locked. Assume that the phase of RCLK_s 42 changes from a value in between PH3 96 and PH2 94 to a value in between PH2 94 and PH1 92. FIG. 12 also illustrates the response of subloop 54 to this situation.

PHERR 198 initially indicates that INTRCLK 60 leads RCLK_s 42. In other words, PHERR 198 becomes and remains a logic 0 for a relatively long period of time. Counter control logic 200 responds by directing up/down counter 206 to count up. Up/down counter 206 does so until it overflows, bringing OFLOW 214 active high while COUNT(3:0) 208 remains at 1111 (binary) and COUNTB(3:0) 210 remains at 0000 (binary).

Active OFLOW 214 pulses odd shift clock, OCLK 238, low. Active OFLOW 214 also brings SHR 234 active high and forces SHL 236 inactive low. Thus, on the active edge of OCLK 238 odd barrel shifter 262 shifts right. This changes OS(5:0) 264 from 000010 (binary) to 000001 (binary). Odd multiplexer 266 responds by deselecting PH3 96 and selecting PH1 92 as odd output signal. Again, phase interpolator 122 prevents the switching of odd output signals 268 from affecting P_{IOUT} 123 because ODDWEIGHT 220 is at its minimum value. Subloop 54 tunes between PH2 94 and PH1 92 as necessary to lock on RCLK_s 44.

Given this description of subloop 54, consider now the operation of subloop 56. Referring again to FIG. 2, the closed loop within subloop 56 closely resembles subloop 54, including phase detector 128, accumulator circuitry 130, phase select circuitry 121, in-phase phase interpolator 122c, amplifier 124c, clock buffer 126c, and output buffer delay compensation circuit 127. As its name implies, output buffer delay compensation circuit 127 allows subloop 56 to compensate for the delay contributed to INTCLK 62 by the output buffers of interface 34. The open loop includes phase select circuitry 121, out-of-phase interpolator 122b, amplifier 124b, and clock buffer 126b.

The heart of subloop 56 is phase select circuitry 121, in-phase phase interpolator 122c, and out-of-phase interpolator 122b. Phase select circuitry 121 performs coarse phase tuning for both the open loop and the closed loop within subloop 56. Each phase interpolator 122b and 122c generates a fine-tuned signal that lies between the two pairs of phase signals coupled to it by phase selector 121. Like subloop 54, both loops with subloop 56 generate 16 fine levels of adjustment between each coarse adjustment level.

Phase select circuitry 121 gives rise to a major difference between subloop 54 and subloop 56. Unlike phase select circuitry 120, phase select circuitry 121 selects two pairs of even phase output signals and two pairs of odd phase output signals. One set of pairs of even and odd phase output signals 248 and 268 is in-phase with TCLK_s 44 and are coupled to in-phase phase interpolator 122c. The other set of pairs of even and odd phase output signals 249 and 269 are out-of-phase with TCLK_s 44 and are coupled to out-of-phase phase interpolator 122b.

The cooperation of phase select circuitry 121 and phase interpolators 122b and 122c can be understood in greater detail with reference to FIG. 13. As can be seen, portion 57 closely resembles portion 55. For this reason, the following description of portion 57 focuses on its differences as compared to portion 55. Unless otherwise stated, portion 57 functions like portion 55, as described with reference to FIGS. 7-12.

The primary difference between phase select circuitry 120 and phase select circuitry 121 arises from even select circuit 241 and odd select circuit 261. Where even select circuit 240 included only one even multiplexer, even select circuit 241 includes two, in-phase even multiplexer 246 and out-of-phase even multiplexer 247. Multiplexers 246 and 247 are identical and receive identical input signals, even select signals 244 and phase signals 58. Even select signals 244 are

15

coupled to multiplexers **246** and **247** in different fashions, however. As a result, in-phase even multiplexer **246** outputs signals **248** that are substantially in-phase with $TCLK_S$ **44**, while out-of-phase multiplexer **247** outputs signals **249** that are out-of-phase with $TCLK_S$ **44**.

Similar to even select circuit **241**, odd select circuit **261** includes two odd multiplexers **266** and **267**. In-phase odd multiplexer **266** and out-of-phase odd multiplexer **267** are identical and receive identical input signals, odd select signals **264** and phase signals **58**. These input signals **264** and **58** are coupled to multiplexers **266** and **267** in differing fashions such that in-phase odd multiplexer **266** outputs signals **268** in substantially in-phase with $TCLK_S$ **44** and out-of-phase odd multiplexer **267** outputs signals out-of-phase with $TCLK_S$ **44**.

In-phase even multiplexer **246** and in-phase odd multiplexer **266** are coupled to even select signals **244**, odd select signals **264**, and phase signals **58** as shown in FIG. 9. The coupling of even select signals **244**, odd select signals **266**, and phase signals **58** is shown in FIG. 14. For simplicity's sake, the pull-up circuitry associated with multiplexer **247** and odd multiplexer **267** has been omitted. In the embodiment shown, out-of-phase even phase output signals **249** and out-of-phase odd phase output signals **269** lead their in-phase counterparts **248** and **268** by substantially 90° . This phase shift in the out-of-phase multiplexer is achieved by associating each select signal with a phase signal **58** that leads by 90° the phase signal associated with that same select signal in the corresponding in-phase multiplexer. For example, in in-phase even multiplexer **246** even select signal **ES0** selects phase signal **PH0 90**. In contrast, out-of-phase even multiplexer **247** selects **PH9 108** using **ES0**. Analogously, while **OS3** is used to select **PH7** in in-phase odd multiplexer **266**, **OS3** is used to select **PH4 98** in out-of-phase odd multiplexer **267**.

The degree of phase shift between signals **248** and **249**, and **268** and **269**, may be arbitrarily selected in other embodiments simply by altering which select signal selects which phase signal in out-of-phase multiplexers **247** and **267**.

Out-of-phase phase interpolator **122b** uses the output of out-of-phase multiplexers **247** and **267** to generate **PIOUT-90° 123b**. Out-of-phase interpolator **122b** also responds to **EVENWEIGHT 218** and **ODDWEIGHT 220**, as discussed with respect to FIGS. 7–12.

Thus, circuitry for performing fine phase adjustment within a phase locked loop has been described. The phase selector selects an even phase signal and an odd phase signal from the twelve phase signals output by the VCO. The even and odd phase signals are selected by an even select signal and an odd select signal, respectively. The phase interpolator interpolates between the even phase signal and the odd phase signal to generate an output signal. The affect of each phase input signal on the output signal is determined by an even weighting signal and an odd weighting signal, respectively. Together, the weighting signals and the switching mechanisms of the phase select circuitry prevent glitches from appearing on the output signal when either the even phase signal or the odd phase signal is switching.

A method of performing fine phase adjustment in a phase locked loop has also been described. First, two phase signals are selected from a multiplicity of phase signals. The two phase signals are selected by a select signal. Next, an output signal is generated by interpolating between the two phase signals. The contribution of each of the two phase signals to the output signal is determined by a weighting signal. The

16

weighting signals prevent glitches from appearing on the output signal when either the even phase signal or the odd phase signal is switching.

Finally, a delay stage for a ring oscillator has also been described. Each delay stage includes a differential amplifier, which generates two complementary output signals. Coupled between the complementary output signals, two voltage clamping means limit the peak-to-peak voltage swing of the output signal. Limiting the peak-to-peak voltage swing of the output signal speeds-up the delay stage and allows the ring oscillator to include a greater number of delay stages, and increases the power supply rejection of the oscillator.

In the foregoing specification, the invention has been described with reference to specific exemplary embodiments thereof. It will, however, be evident that various modifications and changes may be made thereto without departing from the broader spirit and scope of the invention as set forth in the appended claims. The specification and drawings are, accordingly, to be regarded in an illustrative rather than a restrictive sense.

What is claimed is:

1. A ring oscillator comprising:

a plurality of ring coupled delay stages, each delay stage comprising:

(A) a differential amplifier for generating a differential output signal comprising a first output signal at a first node and a second output signal at a second node, wherein the differential amplifier further comprises:

(i) a first transistor coupled to the first node;

(ii) a second transistor coupled to the second node and the first transistor, wherein the first and second transistors are biased by an output level biasing voltage;

(iii) a third transistor coupled to the first node, wherein the third transistor receives a first input signal from a preceding delay stage;

(iv) a fourth transistor coupled to the second node and the third transistor, wherein the fourth transistor receives a second input signal from the preceding delay stage;

(B) a self-biased voltage clamping circuit coupled to the first and second nodes to limit a peak-to-peak voltage swing of the differential output signal; and

(C) a current source coupled to the differential amplifier, the current source varying a bias current through the current source in accordance with a delay bias voltage.

2. The ring oscillator of claim 1, wherein the voltage clamping circuit further comprises:

(i) a first diode-coupled transistor; and

(ii) a second diode-coupled transistor, wherein the first and second diode-coupled transistors are cross-coupled between the first and second nodes.

3. The ring oscillator of claim 2, wherein the first and second diode-coupled transistor are metal-oxide semiconductor transistors.

4. The ring oscillator of claim 2, wherein the first and second diode-coupled transistors are N-type transistors.

5. The ring oscillator of claim 1, wherein the current source further comprises a fifth transistor.

6. The ring oscillator of claim 1 wherein the first and second transistors are of a first type, wherein the third and fourth transistors are of a second type.

7. The ring oscillator of claim 6 wherein the first and second transistors are P-type and the third and fourth transistors are N-type.

17

8. The ring oscillator of claim 6 wherein the first and second transistors are N-type and the third and fourth transistors are P-type.

9. The ring oscillator of claim 6 wherein the first and second types are complementary.

10. The ring oscillator of claim 1 wherein each delay stage further comprises a source follower buffer.

11. A ring oscillator comprising:

a plurality of ring coupled delay stages, each delay stage comprising:

(A) a differential amplifier for generating a first output signal at a first node and a second output signal at a second node, wherein the differential amplifier further comprises:

(i) a first transistor coupled between the first node and a first potential;

(ii) a second transistor coupled between the second node and the first potential, wherein the first and second transistors are biased by an output level biasing voltage;

(iii) a third transistor coupled between the first node and a third node, wherein the third transistor receives a first input signal from a preceding delay stage;

(iv) a fourth transistor coupled between the second node and the third node, wherein the fourth transistor receives a second input signal from the preceding delay stage;

(B) a current source coupled between the third node and a second potential, the current source varying a bias current through the current source in accordance with a delay bias voltage; and

(C) a voltage clamping circuit coupled to the first and second nodes to limit a relative peak-to-peak voltage swing of the first and second output signals without independently clamping each of the first and second nodes.

12. The ring oscillator of claim 11, wherein the voltage clamping circuit further comprises:

(i) a first diode-coupled transistor; and

(ii) a second diode-coupled transistor, wherein the first and second diode-coupled transistors are cross-coupled between the first and second nodes.

13. The ring oscillator of claim 12, wherein the first and second diode-coupled transistors are metal-oxide semiconductor transistors.

14. The ring oscillator of claim 12, wherein the first and second diode-coupled transistors are N-type transistors.

15. The ring oscillator of claim 11, wherein the current source further comprises a fifth transistor.

16. The ring oscillator of claim 11 wherein the first and second transistors are of a first type, wherein the third and fourth transistors are of a second type.

17. The ring oscillator of claim 16 wherein the first and second transistors are P-type and the third and fourth transistors are N-type.

18. The ring oscillator of claim 16 wherein the first and second transistors are N-type and the third and fourth transistors are P-type.

19. The ring oscillator of claim 16 wherein the first and second types are complementary.

20. The ring oscillator of claim 11 wherein each delay stage further comprises a source follower buffer.

21. A ring oscillator comprising:

a plurality of ring coupled delay stages, each delay stage comprising:

a differential amplifier providing a differential output signal;

18

a self-biased voltage clamping circuit coupled to limit a peak-to-peak voltage swing of the differential output signal; and

a current source coupled to the differential amplifier, the current source varying a bias current through the current source in accordance with a delay bias voltage.

22. The ring oscillator of claim 21, wherein the differential amplifier provides a first output signal at a first node and a second output signal at a second node, the first and second output signal forming the differential output signal, wherein the voltage clamping circuit further comprises:

(i) a first diode-coupled transistor; and

(ii) a second diode-coupled transistor, wherein the first and second diode-coupled transistors are cross-coupled between the first and second nodes.

23. A ring oscillator comprising:

a plurality of ring coupled delay stages, each delay stage comprising:

a differential amplifier providing a differential output signal comprising a first output signal at a first node and a second output signal at a second node;

a voltage clamping circuit coupled to the first and second nodes to limit a peak-to-peak voltage swing of the differential output signal without independently clamping each of the first and second nodes; and

a current source coupled to the differential amplifier, the current source varying a bias current through the current source in accordance with a delay bias voltage.

24. The ring oscillator of claim 23, wherein the voltage clamping circuit further comprises:

(i) a first diode-coupled transistor; and

(ii) a second diode-coupled transistor, wherein the first and second diode-coupled transistors are cross-coupled between the first and second nodes.

25. A synchronous memory device comprising:

an array of memory cells to store data;

a clock synchronization loop to generate a plurality of clock signals, each clock signal having a timing relationship with respect to a reference clock signal;

first interpolator circuitry to generate a first internal clock signal from a first and a second clock signal of the plurality of clock signals, wherein a phase of the first internal clock signal is interpolated from respective phases of the first and second clock signals according to phase information indicative of whether the first internal clock signal leads or lags a first external clock signal; and

interface circuitry to synchronize a transmission of data with the first internal clock signal.

26. The memory device of claim 25 wherein the clock synchronization loop is a phase locked loop circuit.

27. The memory device of claim 25 wherein the timing relationship of each one of the plurality of clock signals is a respective phase offset from a phase of the reference clock signal.

28. The memory device of claim 25 wherein the clock synchronization loop comprises a plurality of delay elements coupled in series, each delay element outputting at least one of the plurality of clock signals.

29. The memory device of claim 28 wherein the plurality of delay elements in an even number of delay elements.

30. The memory device of claim 25 further comprising selection circuitry, coupled to the clock synchronization loop, to select the first and second clock signals from the plurality of clock signals.

31. The memory device of claim 30 further comprising:
 a detector circuit to detect a phase polarity between the first internal clock signal and the first external clock signal;
 a shift register, coupled in parallel with the selection circuitry, to output selection signals that control selection of the first and second clock signals; and
 a control circuit to provide shift information to the shift register based on the phase polarity such that the selection signals output by the shift register select clock signals of the plurality of clock signals that have phases neighboring, on respective either sides, the phase of the first external clock signal.
32. The memory device of claim 25, further comprising:
 a detector circuit, coupled to the first interpolator circuitry, to detect the phase information; and
 a control circuit to generate a control voltage that is responsive to the phase information, wherein the first interpolator circuitry steers the phase of the first internal clock signal between the phase of the first and second clock signals in response to the control voltage.
33. The memory device of claim 32 wherein after detection the phase information is represented by a binary value.
34. The memory device of claim 32 wherein the control circuit comprises:
 a digital counter to generate a digital count value in response to the phase information; and
 a digital to analog converter to generate the control voltage from the digital count value.
35. The memory device of claim 25 further comprising a buffer circuit to receive a second external clock signal and generate the reference clock signal using the second external clock signal.
36. The memory device of claim 35 wherein a reception of data is synchronized with the second external clock signal.
37. The memory device of claim 35 wherein the plurality of clock signals comprises a clock signal that is in phase with the second external clock signal.
38. The memory device of claim 25 further comprising second interpolator circuitry to generate a second internal clock signal from a pair of clock signals of the plurality of clock signals, wherein a phase of the second internal clock signal is interpolated from respective phases of the pair of clock signals according to phase information indicative of whether the second internal clock signal leads or lags a second external clock signal.
39. The memory device of claim 25 wherein the data is transmitted during a plurality of clock edge transitions of the first external clock signal.
40. An integrated circuit device comprising:
 interface circuitry to receive first and second external clock signals; and
 clock synchronization circuitry to synchronize a transmission of data with the first external clock signal and to synchronize a reception of data with the second external clock signal, the clock synchronization circuitry including:
 a reference loop to receive a reference clock signal and generate a plurality of clock signals, each clock signal of the plurality of clock signals having a predetermined timing relationship with the reference clock signal;
 a first subloop circuit, coupled to the reference loop, to synchronize the transmission of data with the first external clock signal using the plurality of clock signals; and

- a second subloop circuit, coupled to the reference loop, to synchronize the reception of data with the second external clock signal using the plurality of clock signals.
41. The integrated circuit device of claim 40 wherein the first subloop circuit generates an internal transmit clock signal having a phase relationship with respect to the first external clock signal.
42. The integrated circuit device of claim 41 wherein the phase relationship is a quadrature relationship.
43. The integrated circuit device of claim 41 wherein the internal transmit clock is in phase with the first external clock signal.
44. The integrated circuit device of claim 40 wherein the first subloop circuit further comprises:
 selection circuitry to select first and second clock signals of the plurality of clock signals;
 interpolator circuitry to interpolate between the first and second clock signals, and to generate an internal transmit clock signal in response to a control signal, wherein the control signal steers the phase of the internal transmit clock signal between respective phases of the first and second clock signals; and
 detector circuitry to detect phase information indicative of whether the internal transmit clock signal leads or lags the first external clock signal, and to generate the control signal using the phase information.
45. The integrated circuit device of claim 40 wherein the second subloop circuit generates an internal receive clock signal having a phase relationship with respect to the second external clock signal.
46. The integrated circuit device of claim 45 wherein the internal receive clock signal is in phase with the second external clock signal.
47. The integrated circuit device of claim 40 wherein the second subloop circuit further comprises:
 selection circuitry to select first and second clock signals of the plurality of clock signals;
 interpolator circuitry to interpolate between the first and second clock signals, and to generate an internal receive clock signal in response to a control signal, wherein the control signal steers the phase of the internal receive clock signal between respective phases of the first and second clock signals; and
 detector circuitry to detect phase information indicative of whether the internal receive clock signal leads or lags the second external clock signal, and to generate the control signal using the phase information.
48. The integrated circuit device of claim 40 wherein a first clock signal of the plurality of clock signals is in phase with the second external clock signal, and the other clock signals of the plurality of clock signals have respective phases that are evenly spaced across a clock period of the second external clock signal.
49. The integrated circuit device of claim 40 wherein the reference loop is a phase locked loop circuit.
50. The integrated circuit device of claim 40 wherein the data is transmitted during a plurality of clock edge transitions of the first external clock signal.
51. The integrated circuit device of claim 40 further comprising a buffer circuit to receive the second external clock signal and to generate the reference clock signal from the second external clock signal.
52. A clock synchronization circuit comprising:
 a plurality of delay stages coupled in series to output a plurality of clock signals, each delay stage having a delay time with respect to a reference clock signal;

interpolator circuitry to generate a first clock signal using a pair of clock signals of the plurality of clock signals, wherein a phase of the first clock signal is interpolated between respective phases of each clock signal of the pair of clock signals in accordance with information indicative of whether a phase of the first clock signal leads or lags a phase of an input clock signal; and
 a detector circuit to compare the phase of the first clock signal with the phase of the input clock signal, to generate the information indicative of whether the phase of the first clock signal leads or lags the phase of the input clock signal.

53. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 52 wherein the plurality of delay stages is an even number of delay stages.

54. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 52 further comprising a buffer to output the reference clock signal, wherein the buffer receives the input clock signal.

55. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 52 wherein each delay stage of the plurality of delay stages comprises:
 a first output terminal;
 a second output terminal;
 a first transistor having a source, a drain, and a gate, the source and gate being coupled to the first output terminal, and the drain being coupled to the second output terminal; and
 a second transistor having a source, a drain, and a gate, the source and gate being coupled to the second output terminal, and the drain being coupled to the first output terminal.

56. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 52 wherein the plurality of delay stages is included in a phase locked loop circuit.

57. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 52 further comprising selection circuitry to select the pair of clock signals from the plurality of clock signals.

58. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 52 wherein the detector circuit comprises a phase detector to compare the phase of the first clock signal with the phase of the input clock signal, the phase detector to generate a binary signal that indicates whether the first clock signal leads or lags the input clock signal.

59. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 52 wherein the detector circuit comprises:

a counter circuit to change a count value in a first direction when the phase of the input clock signal lags the phase of the first clock signal, and change the count value in a second direction when the phase of the input clock signal leads the phase of the first clock signal; and

a digital to analog converter circuit to generate an analog control signal from the count value, wherein the analog control signal steers the phase of the first clock signal between the respective phases of each clock signal of the pair of clock signals.

60. A synchronous memory device comprising:

an array of memory cells to store data;

clock synchronization circuitry including:

a plurality of delay stages coupled in series;
 a first multiplexer circuit, coupled to the plurality of delay stages, to perform selection of a delay time for a first internal clock signal, the selection being controlled by a first plurality of control signals;

a first shift register circuit to generate the first plurality of control signals in accordance with information indicative of whether a phase of an external clock

signal leads or lags a phase of an internal transmit clock signal; and

a detector circuit to compare the phase of the external clock signal with the phase of the internal transmit clock signal and generate the information; and

interface circuitry to output data from the memory device, the data being output in synchronism with the internal transmit clock signal, the internal transmit clock signal being generated using the first internal clock signal.

61. The memory device of claim 60 further comprising:

a second multiplexer circuit, coupled to the plurality of delay stages, to perform selection of a delay time for a second internal clock signal, the selection being controlled by a second plurality of control signals; and

a second shift register circuit to generate the second plurality of control signals in accordance with the information indicative of whether the phase of the external clock signal leads or lags the phase of the internal transmit clock signal.

62. The memory device of claim 61 further comprising:
 interpolator circuitry to generate the internal transmit clock signal by interpolating between phases of the first and a second internal clock signals in accordance with a control voltage; and

a control circuit to generate the control voltage according to the information indicative of whether the phase of the external clock signal leads or lags the phase of the internal transmit clock signal.

63. The memory device of claim 62 wherein the control circuit comprises:

a counter circuit to generate a digital count value based on the information; and

a digital to analog converter to generate the control voltage based on the digital count value.

64. The memory device of claim 60, wherein the first internal clock signal is generated by an output of a delay stage of the plurality of delay stages.

65. The memory device of claim 60 wherein the plurality of delay stages is included in a phase locked loop circuit.

66. A synchronous memory device comprising:

an array of memory cells to store data;

a plurality of delay elements coupled in series, each delay element generating a respective output signal having a different phase;

a detector circuit to compare a phase of an external clock signal with a phase of an internal transmit clock signal, the detector circuit to generate information indicative of whether the phase of the external clock signal leads or lags the phase of the internal transmit clock signal;

a multiplexer circuit, coupled to the plurality of delay elements, to select a first output signal generated by the plurality of delay elements in response to the information; and

an interface circuit to output data from the memory device, the data being output in synchronism with the internal transmit clock signal, the internal transmit clock signal being generated using at least the first output signal selected by the multiplexer circuit.

67. The memory device of claim 66 further comprising a shift register coupled to the multiplexer circuit to control selection of the first output signal.

68. The memory device of claim 66 further comprising:
 a control circuit to generate a control voltage that is responsive to the information; and

interpolator circuitry to generate the internal transmit clock signal using the first output signal and a second

output signal generated by the plurality of delay elements, the phase of the internal transmit clock signal being interpolated between the phases of the first and second output signals in response to the control voltage.

69. The memory device of claim 68 wherein the control circuit comprises:

a digital converter to generate a digital count value in response to the information; and

a digital to analog converter to generate the control voltage using the digital count value.

70. The memory device of claim 66 wherein the plurality of delay elements is included in a phase locked loop circuit.

71. A clock synchronization circuit comprising:

a plurality of delay stages coupled in series to output a plurality of clock signals, each delay stage having a respective delay time with respect to a reference clock signal; and

interpolator circuitry coupled to the plurality of delay stages, the interpolator circuitry to generate a first clock signal using a pair of clock signals of the plurality of clock signals, wherein a phase of the first clock signal is interpolated between respective phases of each clock signal of the pair of clock signals in accordance with information indicative of whether the phase of the first clock signal leads or lags a target phase, wherein the target phase is based on transitions in an input signal.

72. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 71 further comprising detector circuitry coupled to the interpolator circuitry, the detector circuitry to compare the phase of the first clock signal with the target phase, the detector circuitry to generate the information indicative of whether the phase of the first clock signal leads or lags the target phase.

73. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 72 wherein the detector circuitry comprises a counter circuit to change a count value in a first direction when the target phase lags the phase of the first clock signal, and change the count value in a second direction when the target phase leads the phase of the first clock signal, wherein the information indicative of whether the phase of the first clock signal leads or lags the target phase is based on the count value.

74. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 73 wherein the information indicative of whether the phase of the first clock signal leads or lags the target phase is provided as an analog control signal, and wherein the detector circuitry further comprises a digital to analog converter circuit coupled to the counter circuit, the digital to analog converter circuit to generate the analog control signal from the count value, wherein the analog control signal controls interpolation between the respective phases of the clock signals of the pair of clock signals to produce the phase of the first clock signal.

75. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 71 wherein the target phase is detected based on sampling of the input signal.

76. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 75 wherein the input signal is sampled using the first clock signal.

77. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 76 wherein the input signal is a clock signal.

78. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 71 wherein the input signal includes clock information.

79. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 78 wherein the input signal is a clock signal.

80. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 79 wherein the input signal and the reference clock signal are both derived from an external clock signal.

81. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 80 wherein the input signal is the reference clock signal.

82. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 71 wherein the plurality of delay stages is an even number of delay stages.

83. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 71 wherein the plurality of delay stages and the interpolator circuitry are formed on a single integrated circuit device.

84. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 83 further comprising a buffer coupled to the interpolator circuitry, the buffer to receive the input signal from external to the integrated circuit device.

85. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 83 further comprising a buffer coupled to the plurality of delay stages, the buffer to receive the reference clock signal from external to the integrated circuit device.

86. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 71 wherein each delay stage of the plurality of delay stages comprises:

a first output terminal;

a second output terminal;

a first transistor having a source, a drain, and a gate, the source and gate being coupled to the first output terminal, and the drain being coupled to the second output terminal; and

a second transistor having a source, a drain, and a gate, the source and gate being coupled to the second output terminal, and the drain being coupled to the first output terminal.

87. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 71 wherein the plurality of delay stages is included in a phase locked loop circuit.

88. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 71 further comprising selection circuitry coupled to the interpolator circuitry, the selection circuitry to select the pair of clock signals from the plurality of clock signals.

89. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 71 further comprising a phase detector to compare the phase of the first clock signal with the target phase, and to generate the information indicative of whether the phase of the first clock signal leads or lags the target phase, wherein the information is represented by a binary signal.

90. The clock synchronization circuit of claim 71 wherein each delay stage of the plurality of delay stages generates complementary outputs, wherein each output of the complementary outputs is one of the plurality of clock signals.

91. A method for clock synchronization, comprising:

generating a plurality of clock signals from a reference clock signal, wherein each clock signal of the plurality of clock signals is delayed from the reference clock signal by a corresponding delay time such that a plurality of different delays with respect to the reference clock signal are represented in the plurality of clock signals;

detecting phase of an input signal, wherein the phase of the input signal represents a target phase; and

generating a first clock signal based on a pair of clock signals of the plurality of clock signals, wherein generating the first clock signal includes interpolation between the pair of clock signals using information indicative of whether the phase of the first clock signal leads or lags the target phase.

92. The method of claim 91 wherein detecting phase of the input signal further comprises sampling the input signal.

93. The method of claim 92 wherein sampling the input signal further comprises sampling the input signal based on the first clock signal.

25

94. The method of claim 93 wherein the input signal is a clock signal.

95. The method of claim 94 wherein the input signal and the reference clock signal are generated from an external clock signal.

96. The method of claim 92 further comprises selecting the pair of clock signals from the plurality of clock signals based on the sampling of the input signal.

97. The method of claim 91 wherein generating the plurality of clock signals further comprises generating the plurality of clock signals using a plurality of delay stages coupled in series, wherein each delay stage of the plurality of delay stages generates complementary outputs, wherein each output of the complementary outputs is one of the plurality of clock signals.

98. The method of claim 91 wherein the input signal includes clock information.

99. The method of claim 98 wherein the input signal is a clock signal.

100. An integrated circuit comprising:

a plurality of delay stages coupled in series to output a plurality of clock signals, each delay stage of the plurality of delay stages having a delay time with respect to a reference clock signal;

26

a phase detector to determine the phase of an input signal by sampling the input signal, wherein the phase of the input signal is based on at least one transition in the input signal, the phase detector to generate information indicative of whether a phase of a first clock signal leads or lags the phase of the input signal; and

interpolator circuitry coupled to the plurality of delay stages and the phase detector, the interpolator circuitry to generate the first clock signal using a pair of clock signals of the plurality of clock signals, wherein the phase of the first clock signal is interpolated between respective phases of the pair of clock signals in accordance with the information indicative of whether the phase of the first clock signal leads or lags the phase of the input signal.

101. The integrated circuit of claim 100 wherein the phase detector samples the input signal using the first clock signal.

102. The integrated circuit of claim 100 wherein the input signal includes clock information.

103. The integrated circuit of claim 102 wherein the input signal is a clock signal.

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