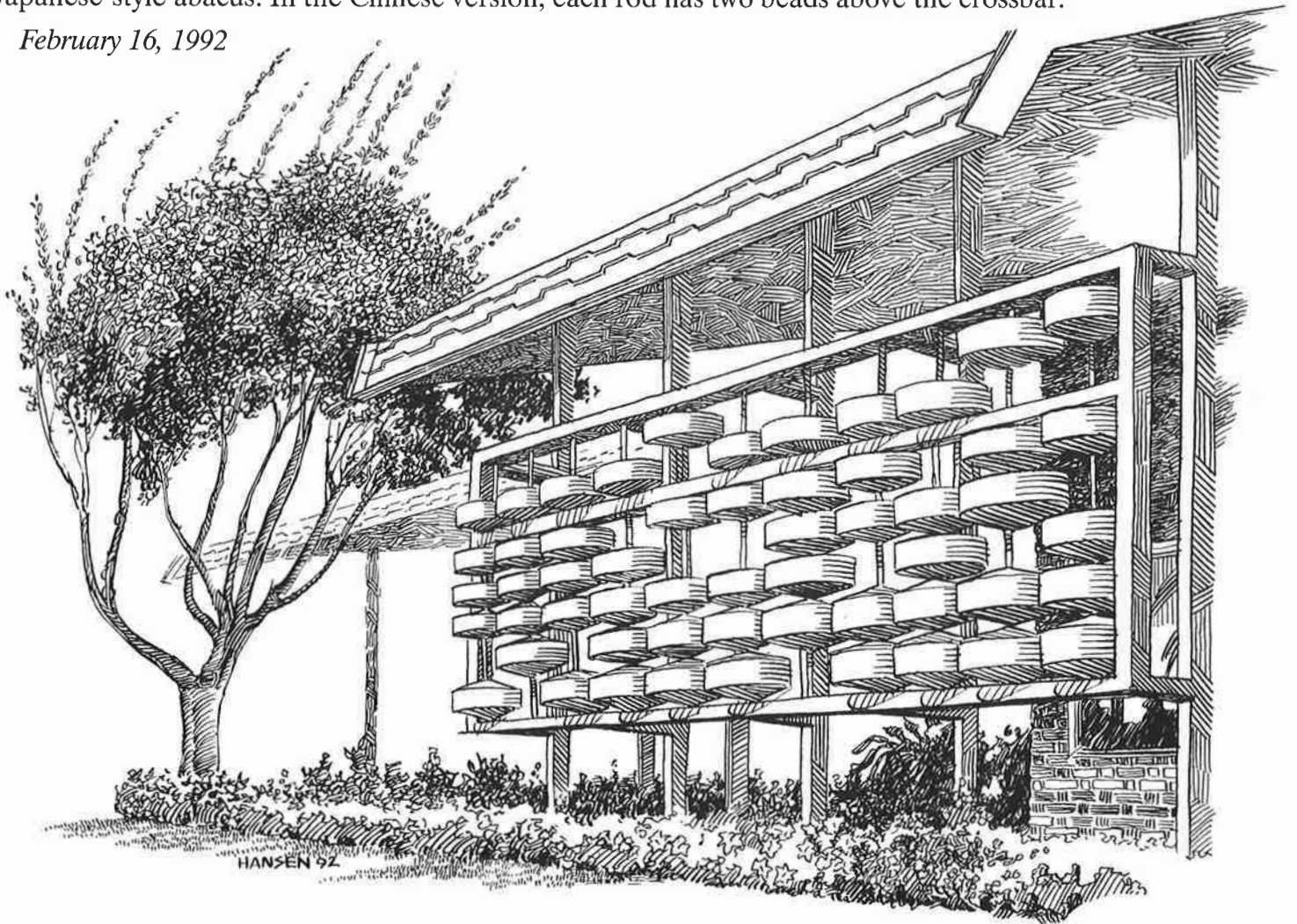


## Guarantee Savings and Loan Abacus

**O**n the southwest corner of Blackstone and Ashlan avenues is a steel construction that has the look of abstract sculpture. It's an abacus, possibly the largest in the world. Though an ancient device, in skilled hands the abacus remains a swift and accurate calculator. Lew Eaton, former president of Guarantee Savings and Loan Association, told me his fascination with the abacus began in the '40s with visits to the Chinese Bazaar. At this gift shop in downtown Fresno, the Wong family used an abacus to figure their accounts.

In 1958, the Guarantee Savings Ashlan Avenue branch office was opened. An abacus hanging on Eaton's office wall inspired architect Robert Stevens to design this big, working abacus as a screen for the drive-in teller window. The moveable, yellow-painted beads were rearranged regularly to reflect the institution's current assets. In 1986, Guarantee was sold to Glendale Federal Bank. This is a Japanese-style abacus. In the Chinese version, each rod has two beads above the crossbar.

*February 16, 1992*



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*The abacus was filmed by a Japanese video team which came to Fresno in the mid-'70s. The documentary was shown on Japanese television.*