

editor's  
**letter**

BY  
**S. MURALI**

# CROUCHING ASIA, WHEN WILL IT RISE?

I know it is cruel to point out, but the two players who choked at the conclusion of the recent Presidents Cup, which was played in Asia for the first time, were Asian.

On the decisive 18th hole, India's Anirban Lahiri missed a three-footer for birdie while Bae Sang Moon chunked a chip which almost rolled back to his feet. Needless to say, both men lost their matches, allowing the Americans to narrowly edge the Cup 15½ to 14½.

Yes, there were other mistakes from the International team that led to the defeat, but it was these two shots that hurt the most.

Sure, it was great to see both of them in the team, along with Thailand's Thongchai

Jaidee but it made me wonder if Asian golf has really improved over the past 30 years.

It is a tough question and one that contributing editor Spencer Robinson tries to answer in this issue.

My own take? Yes it has but not enough.

The women's game has always been a standard bearer, with stars like World No 1 Park In Bee ruling the roost with regularity and with five other South Koreans alongside her in the top 10 of the Rolex World Rankings.

But the men's game has always struggled to produce a top-level competitor.

Only one Major has ever been won by an Asian player – YE Yang won the 2009 US PGA Championship – and while others have come close, Asia has yet to see a real superstar emerge to take on the big

names in the sport.

A lot of hope has been placed on young stars like Hideki Matsuyama, Bae and Anirban but I get the feeling that the ascent to the top might just be too hard, even for these talented, ambitious individuals.

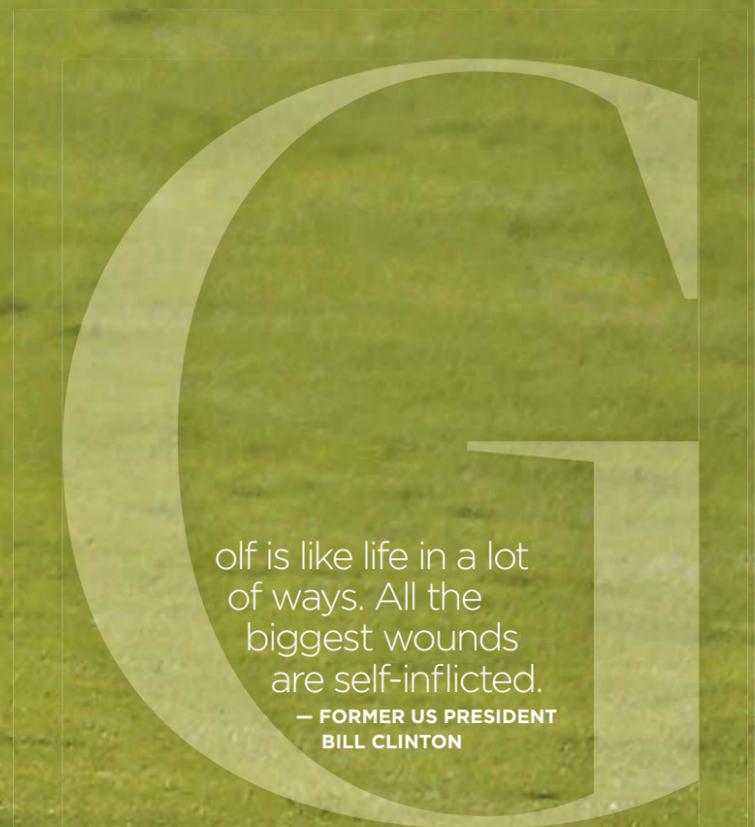
China has been working hard to produce good amateurs and it was heartening to see 14-year-old Guan Tianliang play and make the cut at the 2013 US Masters.

This year's Asia Pacific Amateurs was also won by 17-year-old Beijing native Jin Cheng, who will get to play in next year's US Masters and final qualifying round of the British Open.

But these are just small highlights in a golf world that does not seem ready to change its current world order.

The Americans seem to have a production line for world-class players and they are getting younger all the time.

Throw into that mix the young European and Australian stars like Rory McIlroy and Jason Day and you have to wonder whether any Asian golfer is going to emerge as a world-class contender anytime soon.



Golf is like life in a lot of ways. All the biggest wounds are self-inflicted.

— FORMER US PRESIDENT  
BILL CLINTON

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**Golf Digest**

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