Bridging cultural gaps with understanding and course design

By DESMOND MIURHEAD

I am sad and melancholy at the growing rift between America and Japan. I hope that golf can help bridge it.

In the early 1980s I renewed my acquaintance with Japan, after a break with golf course architecture from 1974-1984. At this time I visited Tokyo to secure financing for some new towns we designed in America. It was then that I met Sato Sawamura and Nitto Kogyo Co. They remembered New St. Andrews north of Tokyo, which we had designed with Jack Nicklaus in 1972, and which has since become one of Japan’s better known golf courses. (Shinuyo Golf Club near Nagoya, recently the venue for the Japanese match-play PGA Tournament, was the result of this visit to Tokyo. It took five years from conception to opening.)

We presently have five new courses under construction in Japan, each of which is unique in its own way. It may not be possible to build a great course each time as it is frequently announced. Usually a great course needs time to become great.

After returning to golf course architecture in America in the early 1970s, I renewed my acquaintance with Japan, after a break with golf course architecture from 1974-1984. (Shinyo Golf Club near Nagoya, recently the venue for the Japanese match-play PGA Tournament, was the result of this visit to Tokyo. It took five years from conception to opening.)

We presently have five new courses under construction in Japan, each of which is unique in its own way. It may not be possible to build a great course each time as it is frequently announced. Usually a great course needs time to become great.

Desmond Muirhead was educated at Cambridge University in England. He has designed more than 100 golf courses, including Muirfield Village and Mission Hills. He pioneered in the relationship of golf courses and residential developments. He has homes in Jupiter, Fla.; Newport Beach, Calif.; and Honolulu, Hawaii.

Muirfield Village and Mission Hills. He reworked nature at St. Andrews. It is a myth that it was built by nature alone. In the Anglo-Saxon countries, it is peripheral to it. So would like each of my courses in Japan to be a masterpiece. I would like to become a national treasure of Japan like my admired acquaintance Kakiemon XIV.

Finally, never forget that everywhere golf is only a game, not a religion, a marathon or an endurance test. It should be entertaining, enjoyable, amusing and memorable.