STRONG FOUNDATIONS

The most wealthy and influential names in Singapore attended a ceremony to mark the handing over of a gift of S$50 million by the Lee Foundation, represented by brothers Lee Song Gee, Lee Song Wee and Lee Song Tee to the Singapore Management University, the largest private gift ever made towards education in Singapore. Welcoming guests as they entered the Isana – including Wee Cho Yew, Richard Hu, Sat Pal Khattar – was chairman of the Singapore Management University, Ho Kwon Ping.

A musical quartet from the SMU Symphony performed as people made their way into the ballroom. The atmosphere was informal and relaxed as the opportunity was taken to catch up with each other and perhaps, cut a business deal. After all, many of the bigwigs of the banking and business industries were present. President SR Nathan and his wife, Urmila, arrived slightly later and, playing the part of gracious hosts, went around the room, shaking hands.

An intimate dinner was held later at which Tharman Shanmugaratnam, the Minister for Education, was called upon to make a speech. He said that the government would provide matching grants on a 3:1 basis, bringing the total sum to S$200 million. The gift, he said, opened up tremendous opportunities to develop excellence in the SMU and came at a time when Singapore was seeking to take the university sector to a higher plane. The cheque was accepted by the president on behalf of the university, after which there was a showing of a commemorative documentary on Lee Kong Chian, who set up the Lee Foundation and contributed a major part of his wealth to schools and universities in Singapore and China.

Lee Foundation Landmark Gift

Venue: Istana
Menu: Pan-fried scallop salad with lemongrass dressing; seafood bisque; tea-smoked chicken breast with fruits on stir-fried shimeji, glazed with orange-basil oil; glutinous rice fillet of cod wrapped in bamboo leaf; coconut chilled cheng teng with hashima
Entertainment: Quartet from the Singapore Management University