Ho Bee donates $3m to SMU

By Ho Ai Li

WITH China’s economy steaming hot, expertise is needed to read the tea leaves.

With this goal in mind, home-grown real-estate company Ho Bee Investment has donated $3 million to the Singapore Management University (SMU).

The firm’s gift – matched dollar for dollar by the Government – will be used to set up the Ho Bee Professorship in Chinese Economy and Business.

SMU president Howard Hunter said the university can now appoint an “internationally acclaimed research scholar” in this area.

Yesterday, Ho Bee chief executive and chairman Chua Thian Poh presented a cheque to SMU. Guests included Deputy Prime Minister Wong Kan Seng and Finance and Education Minister Tharman Shanmugaratnam. Professor Hunter said the new professorship gives SMU a chance to start programmes which foster a better understanding of new business practices in China.

The new professor, who has yet to be appointed, would lend a hand in areas such as curriculum planning, joint research and mentoring.

Mr Chua told reporters later: “We hope the professorship will nurture our younger generation.”

The donation is Ho Bee’s largest education gift. It plans to give the same amount or more to start a professorship in a different subject at Nanyang Technological University. This would be announced in July or August.

SMU chairman Ho Kwon Ping told reporters that the funds that came with professorships like Ho Bee’s would enable it to hire world-class academics. Students benefit when these academics come to SMU to teach or do research, he added.