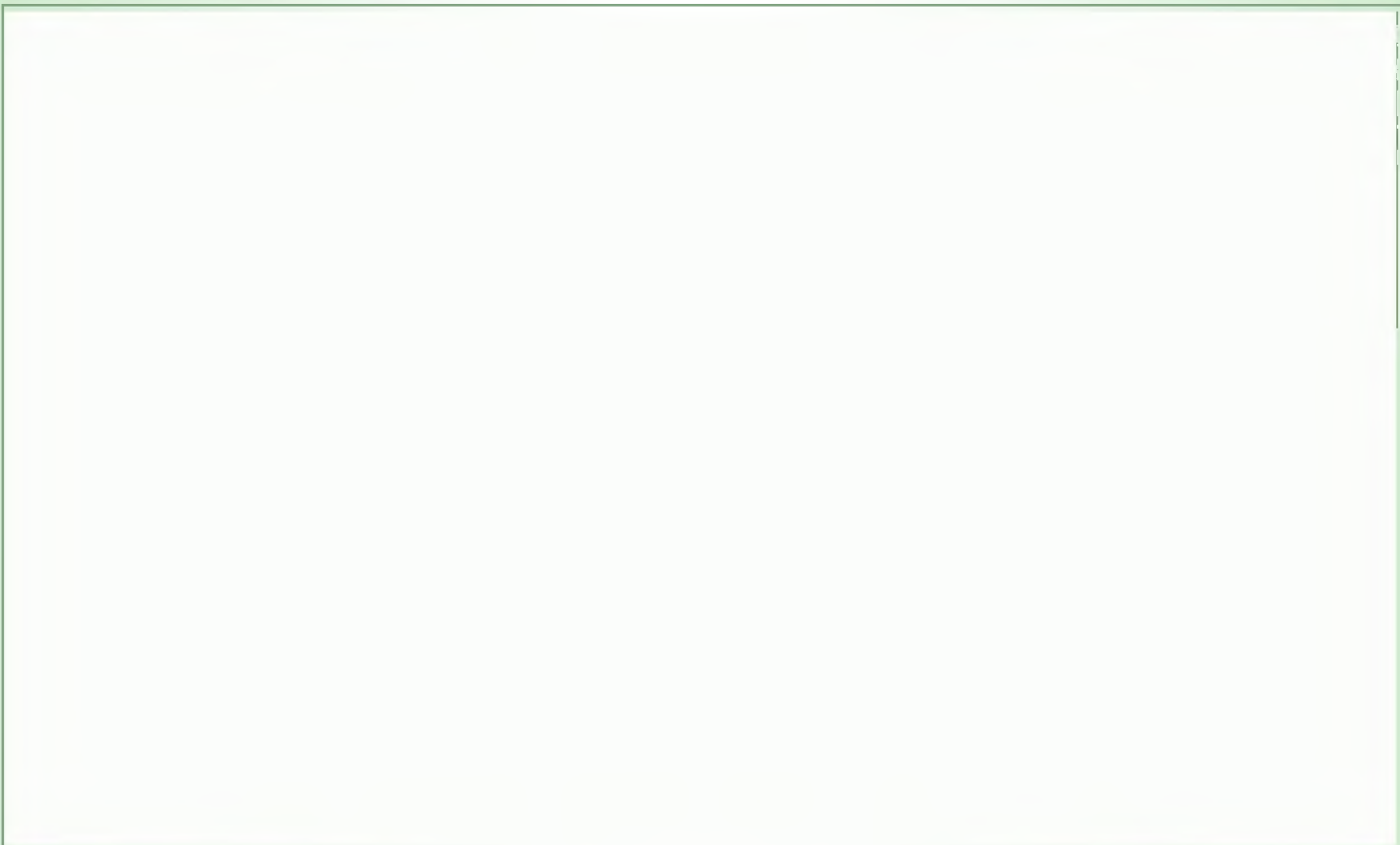


Lecturer's Contribution



Bastille Day

by Seng Hui Zanne

Every 14th of July, the French celebrate their National Day, also known as Bastille Day in English-speaking countries. In France, people will say either "la fête nationale" (national day) or "le quatorze juillet" (the 14th of July) instead of "Bastille Day".

When you want to wish the French on the National Day, you can say "Joyeux 14 juillet" (Joyeux: Happy; 14 juillet: 14th July) or "Bonne fête nationale" (Bonne: Good; fête nationale: national day).

On 14 July 1789, the people of Paris attacked La Bastille, a medieval fortification and a state prison in Paris. Political prisoners and those detained under the King's direct order with no chance of appeal, were often imprisoned there. La Bastille is a symbol of the harsh ruling of the monarchy. The citizens seized the weapons to fight the King's troops. This attack signalled the first victory of

the citizens against the Old regime and the beginning of the French Revolution.

Exactly a year later, on 14 July 1790, la Fête de la Fédération (the Feast of the Federations) took place on the Champ de Mars, where Charles Maurice de Talleyrand, bishop of Autun, conducted a Mass involving thousands of people from all provinces to celebrate the abolishment of the old regime and the birth of constitutional monarchy. In 1880, July 14 was officially declared as the French National Day.



Every year, traditional military parades take place on the Champs-Élysées in Paris. In addition, numerous fireworks and events, along with public revelry, are held all over France.