

all shades of the French political spectrum—including the Socialists—have come to accept his policy of commitment to alliance goals combined with flexible military obligations dictated by national needs. Overall, argues Harrison, a professor of European studies at Johns Hopkins, the independent behavior of France has made the Atlantic Alliance more responsive to the needs of member nations and more pluralistic—and therefore stronger in an age of international instability.

—Samuel F. Wells ('77)

OUTLAWS OF THE MARSH (2 vols.)

by Shi Nai'an and Luo Guanzhong; translated by Sidney Shapiro
Ind. Univ., 1981
1,605 pp. \$37.50



Song Jiang, desperado chief of a gang of thousands, led only one of many rebellions in Chinese history, but the exploits of this 12th-century oriental Robin Hood became the favorite subject of medieval legendry. Song's subordinate chiefs acquired colorful sobriquets (e.g., Iron Ox), carried distinctive weapons, and boasted special skills (control over clouds). Crude and bloodthirsty, they were also generous to a fault. Their goal: to right the wrongs of oppressors "in Heaven's behalf." Faced by this daunting assemblage, the Emperor finally had but one recourse: to grant amnesty and employ the gang in his service. In the 14th century, two gifted writers, Shi Nai'an and Luo Guanzhong, crafted *Outlaws* out of the Song legends. From this popular classic, Mao Zedong gleaned tips on guerrilla warfare—though he denounced Song as a capitulator. Pearl Buck's *All Men Are Brothers* brought parts of *Outlaws* to the West. But Shapiro's effort represents a three-fold improvement: His knowledge of Chinese makes this version more accurate, his straightforward English proves more graceful than Buck's Sinicized patois, and his reliance on earlier editions of the original produces a more comprehensive text. With its clash of blades and touch of fantasy, *Outlaws* is at least as engrossing as Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*. A saga of medieval derring-do, it has the advantage of being the genuine article.

—Cyril Birch ('81)