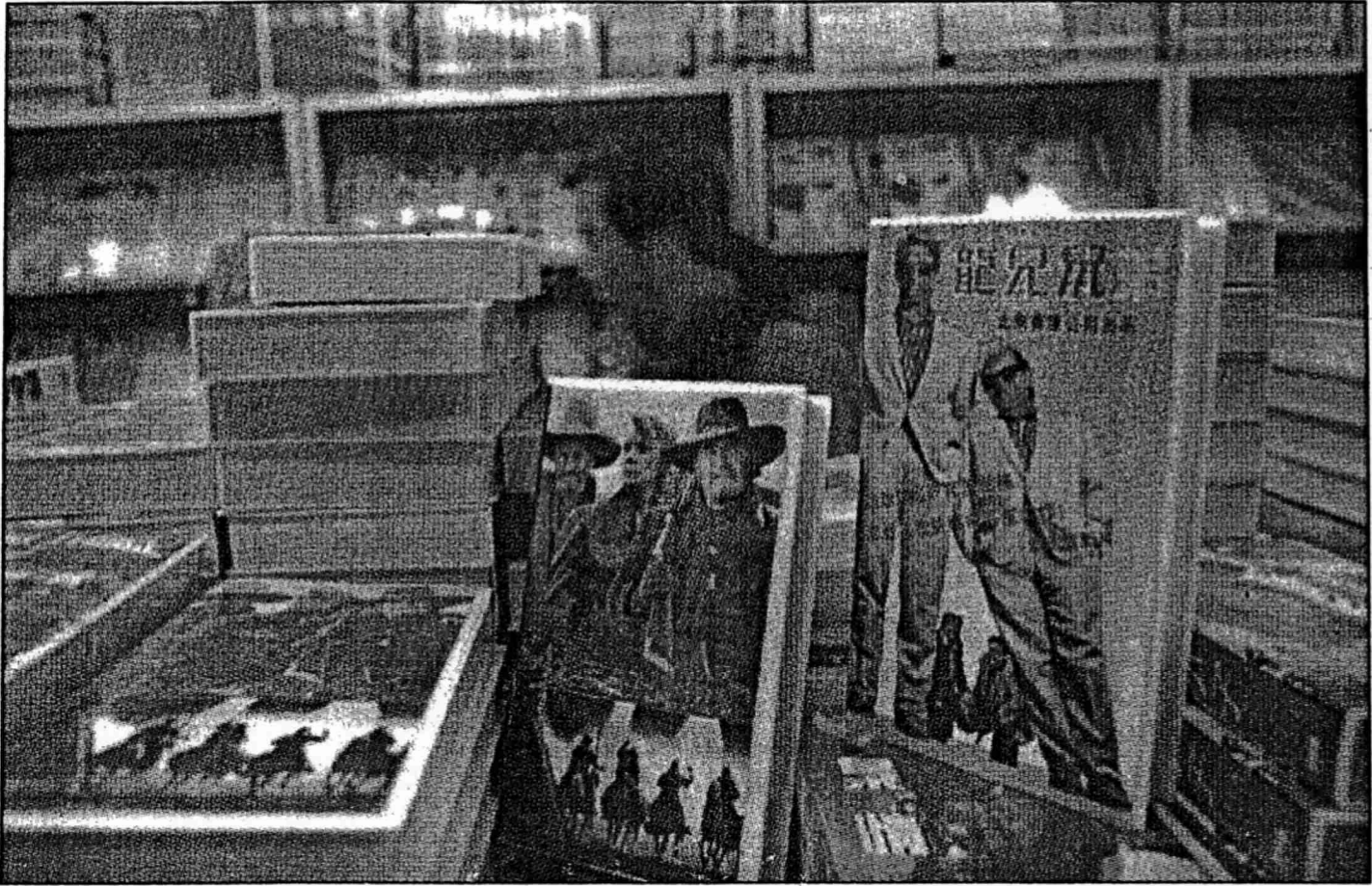


# A penchant for piracy



AP/LOIS RAIMONDO

Retail outlets in China, such as this one in Beijing, offer locally licensed versions of foreign videos for \$6 rather than the street price of \$2.

## Hong Kong's preference for pilfered software is killing the city's technology dreams

By Harry Mok and Ahmad Co  
SPECIAL TO THE EXAMINER

**H**ONG KONG — It took only a few days after its U.S. debut before "Star Wars: Episode I — The Phantom Menace" was on sale on the streets of Hong Kong.

Even though the movie is not supposed to open in Hong Kong cinemas until next month, the appearance of pirated copies of the film was no surprise to many.

One definite dark side of Hong Kong revolves around technology piracy. As later installments of the movie series will show, the dark side is often hard to resist.

Pirated video compact discs of the movie were selling for as little as \$2.50 soon after the movie's U.S. release. The bootlegged versions were recorded by hand-held video cameras in stateside cinemas.

The pictures and sounds are grainy, and the crowd can be heard cheering as the movie opens. Silhouettes of heads can also be seen moving across the

[See PIRACY, C-3]

## THE SERIES

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** In a five-part series, The Examiner business section explores the economic climate of Hong Kong nearly two years after the Asian metropolis exchanged the British Union Jack for the red star of China. While the political change was certainly dramatic for Hong Kong and its residents, the economic crisis that has gripped Asia for more than two years has proven to be the more difficult adjustment.

**Sunday:**

Hong Kong's economy  
Surviving the recession  
The technology race

► **Monday:** Technology piracy

**Tuesday:** Slumping tourism

NOTE: Examiner National Edition stories appear one day later.

