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Imitation to Innovation in China

'This volume fills an important need for understanding about the interplay between China's intellectual property protection system and the potential for innovation in China's economy. Using examples from the pharmaceutical and biotech industries, the author suggests that, despite the widely documented challenges facing China's IPR protection system, the system has a demonstrable effect on innovation. The author suggests that China's patent system promotes innovation through economic incentives, soft factors of public encouragement, and intentional development strategies. This book is also useful as an overview of China's biotech and pharmaceutical sectors, offering a range of richly detailed case studies on China's industrial development strategies in these sectors. A number of important patent disputes between Chinese and foreign companies are also examined to useful effect. In the highly contentious policy world of intellectual property protection and pharmaceutical and biotech industry development, the volume offers a refreshing combination of detail and insight.'

— Pitman B. Potter, University of British Columbia, Canada

'Yahong Li's pioneering study, Imitation to Innovation in China, breaks new ground in closely examining the extent to which the Chinese government's patent policies and patent activity by Chinese firms are influencing China's coming transformation from an imitation-oriented country to an innovation-oriented one. Her combination of theoretical and empirical approaches exploring the links between public policy, patenting activity and technological innovation (commercialization) is an important contribution to development studies, not just for China but for other newly innovative countries as well.'

—William O. Hennessey, Franklin Pierce Law Center, USA

Following decades in which China's approach to technology has been to imitate, the country is now transforming itself to become innovation-oriented. This pioneering study examines whether patents play as similar a role in promoting innovation in China as they do in the West, exploring the interplay between patents and China's biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries in particular.

The author argues for a stronger patent regime based on an extensive review of the technological capacity, R&D models, patent filings and litigations, and issues in patent law, which involve China's biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries. By comparing China with other developing countries and analyzing China's uniqueness in terms of its development stage, technological capacity and the strengths and weaknesses in its patent system, the author concludes that China is distinguished from the prevailing view that patents play a limited role in innovation in developing countries. The book also discusses whether and how patents can promote innovation in China's biotechnology and pharmaceutical industries, based on the study of market scale, R&D capacity, innovation model and patent legislation and cases.

Yahong Li is Associate Professor and Director of the LLM Program in Intellectual Property and Information Technology Law at the University of Hong Kong.

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