Iron implements have been considered to have appeared in the Japanese and Korean regions along with the Yan State's enhanced production capacity of iron implements and their proliferation to the eastern area. That time has been estimated from the end of the Warring States Period to the beginning of the Former Han Dynasty. Therefore, the appearance of iron implements has not been dated back to before the third century B.C. However, there are no tangible grounds for the dating. Some researchers are suggesting the possibility that iron implements spread out in the Yan State before 300 B.C.

Under these circumstances, the calendar date of round clay-stripe pottery, closely related with the oldest iron implements in the Korean Peninsula, was estimated by using the carbon-14 dating method. The estimation indicates that iron implements already appeared in the Korean Peninsula in the fourth century B.C. This result is consistent with the carbon-14 date of the ancient foundations from which iron implements were unearthed as well as an assumption of the long chronology of the Yayoi culture and simultaneous existence of clay-stripe pottery and Yayoi pottery.

A further study on early iron implements in the Korean Peninsula was conducted while laying stress on iron axes and making a comparison with Japanese materials. The study reveals the differences in features of iron implements between the two regions in spite of the almost simultaneous appearance. Cast iron axes seem to have had wide variations in the shape, mold, and excavation condition. One of the reasons for this is considered, however, that more double-banded axes have been excavated in the Japanese Islands than in the Korean Peninsula. Therefore, this article does not consider it appropriate to understand that the Japanese islands were under the influence of the Yan State or that iron implements were introduced into the Japanese Islands directly from the Yan State but not through the Korean Peninsula.

Judged from the foreign pottery unearthed in the Japanese and Korean regions, the appearance of the oldest iron implements in the Japanese Islands seem to have had a close connection with the immigration of people with round clay-stripe pottery. Round clay-stripe pottery in both regions were not locally originated but derived from overseas. Early iron implements and related technologies of the immigrants seem to have been transformed according to the local environment in the course of
their settlement. A study on the differences of how to accept iron implements between the Songguk-ri culture and the Yayoi culture can reveal differences of attitudes and perspectives concerning iron implements between the two cultures.

Key words: Early iron implements, Iron axes, Clay-stripe pottery, Calendar date, Immigration