

「知っている」とknowはどこが違う？

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What Difference Is There Between *Sitteiru* and *Know*?

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This article deals with the meaning and usage of *sitteiru* ‘to know (someone/ something)’ in Japanese. Unlike the English counterpart, *know*, it does not refer to a source of information. This means that *sitteiru* can be used in the sense of having information based on a first-hand evidence or a reportive/hearsay information. For example, we can say (1) in any sense of (2).

- (1) John Lenon o sitteimasu ka?
John Lennon O know Honorific Q
(O: Object marker, Q: Question marker)
- (2) a. Do you know anything about John Lennon?
b. Do you know who John Lennon was?
c. Have you heard of John Lennon?

Needless to say, in English, we cannot say “Do you know John Lennon?” in any sense of (2). This is because *know* requires a direct evidence: When I said “I know John Lennon,” I would mean that I am acquainted with him and we are friends (although he is a late rock star). Speaking of *sitteiru*, the mode of getting information is lexically unspecified and thus can be complemented depending on context. This is why (1) is possible in Japanese. This article proposes that this lexical property is due to the high-context Japanese culture.