

Onegaishimasu

Karate classes in many styles are formally begun by bowing to the sensei or instructor and saying *onegaishimasu*. In the culture of the martial arts this Japanese word is generally understood to mean “please teach me.” Actually it is just a very formal expression for “please” or “I beg of you,” as would be said to a person of very superior rank. Probably the original expression was *misete onegaishimasu* (“show me, I beg of you”), but became shortened over many decades of use. A related phrase, useful when difficult techniques are being explained or demonstrated, is *mo ichido onegaishimasu* (“Once more, please?”).

Onegaishimasu

(Please; I beg of you [teach me])

Mō ichido onegaishimasu

(Once more, please?)

(Underlined letters are nearly silent. The macron (bar) above a letter means that the vowel sound is held for about twice the usual duration.)

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