Observation of *Green Onion Oriental Deli & Market Organic Foods*
Conducted on March 12, 2007 (6:30 pm)

Arriving at the Green Onion for the first time, my initial impression of the store from the outside looking in was “Wow, this place looks really modern.” Unlike AMKO, which in my mind represented more of the stereotypical Asian grocery store like the many I’ve been to in Chinatown, Green Onion reminded me a lot some American grocery stores like a *Jewel* or a *Dominick’s* (if you happen to be from the Chicagoland Area, you’ll know what I’m talking about). Entering the store, my initial impression was further confirmed by the presences of a Deli counter on the east side of the store and by how strikingly clean and organized everything appeared. The floor was spotless and all of the shelves were well organized neatly and packed with as much product as possible. To add to the visual aesthetics there was also music playing—the kind one would hear in an elevator (I believe it was Bethovan’s “Moonlight” Sonata) which made shopping there pretty interesting.

Despite the different feel, the products that Green Onion carried were pretty much identical to AMKO, but with a smaller selection. The east wall, much like AMKO’s south wall consisted of household appliances and goods including pans, scales, and kitchen utensils with the frozen food section being on the opposite west wall. The majority of the products carried by Green Onion were almost exclusively Korean with a handful of Japanese products and an even smaller handful of Thai products. This could be
due to its smaller size (Green Onion is probably half the size of AMKO) or the owner’s decision to focus more on targeting Korean customers or both.

Looking at the signs in store and products carried suggested that Green Onion catered mostly to Korean Americans. Very few products contained any writing in English and handmade signs were also composed primarily of Korean. When I visited Green Onion, I was the only one of four shoppers unable to speak Korean. Like AMKO, Green Onion also contained advertisements that were in Korean posted at the front of the store. This time, I really had no idea what the advertisements were for—I think it may have been a Korean drink, but again, not sure.

My experience at checkout also confirmed that Green Onion catered mostly to Korean Americans. When I was ready to pay, the man working behind the register asked me in Korean if I had a rewards card but then asked me again in English when I appeared very confused. I told him I didn’t, to which he suggested I fill out an application so that I could save a few bucks. I agreed and began on filling it out as he rang up my goods. I worked through pretty quickly filling out the usual mundane information including name, address, etc, but when I got to the bottom I realized that the entire agreement statement at the bottom was in Korean. A little embarrassed (not sure why I was, but I think it’s a general fear of looking stupid) I sheepishly asked what the bottom of the agreement said (it asked for authorization for Green Onion to send me information on promotions) before signing the document and paying. Interestingly, my Green Onion rewards card also had Korean writing written on the back, but I didn’t have a chance to ask what it said (Figures 3 & 4).
Figure 1: Green Onion store sign

Figure 2: Outside of Green Onion
Figure 3: Green Onion rewards card

Figure 4: The back of Green Onion rewards card