Why do Filipinos celebrate Chinese New Year?

There has been a significant Chinese presence in the Philippines even before the Spaniards arrived in the 15th century. Now, there are approximately 2 million Filipinos with pure Chinese ancestry and 30 million Filipinos with at least some Chinese ancestry. With the population of the Chinese in the country, it is not surprising for an important cultural tradition such as the Chinese New Year to be a part of Philippine culture.

Even the Philippine government has acknowledged the importance of this colorful tradition. Under the Aquino administration, the Philippines began celebrating the Chinese New Year as a non-working holiday in 2012. In Proclamation No. 295 issued in November 2011, Aquino said the declaration of the Chinese New Year as a special non-working holiday would allow Filipinos and Filipino-Chinese to celebrate the holiday.

It is said that Aquino's declaration is a nod to his ancestry as the Cojuangcos - his matriarch's clan - are themselves Filipino-Chinese. In his declaration, Aquino said the celebration of Chinese New Year "is a manifestation of our solidarity with our Chinese-Filipino brethren who have been part of our lives in many ways as a country and as a people."
Vocabulary Study:

| approximately | roughly, about, more or less |
| ancestry      | origin; family; family tree  |
| special non-working holiday | a holiday declared or announced by the government; dates may change and vary |
| nod           | a sign of approval or agreement |
| matriarch     | a female head of a family     |
| clan          | group of people related by blood or marriage |
| manifestation | a sign of something existing or happening |
| solidarity    | unity and agreement between and support for the members of a group |
| brethren      | ancient plural form of “brother”; (used as a form of address to members of an organization or religious group) brothers |

Write the correct vocabulary word to complete the sentences:

1. His decision to move our operations to another town got a _______________ from the board of directors.
   a. approximately
   b. manifestation
   c. matriarch
   d. nod
   e. solidarity

2. Our president's willingness to talk to their leader is a clear _______________ of his ability to manage international relations.
   a. approximately
   b. manifestation
   c. matriarch
   d. nod
   e. solidarity

3. She has been a well-respected _______________ for fifty years.
   a. approximately
   b. manifestation
   c. matriarch
   d. nod
   e. solidarity

4. We gathered to show _______________ with the victims of the typhoon.
   a. approximately
   b. manifestation
   c. matriarch
   d. nod
   e. solidarity

5. We have _______________ 500 supporters, so I think we can win this thing.
   a. approximately
   b. manifestation
   c. matriarch
   d. nod
   e. solidarity
Comprehension Questions:

1. How many Filipinos today have pure Chinese ancestry? How many Filipinos today have at least some Chinese ancestry?
2. When did the Philippines start celebrating Chinese New Year as a special non-working holiday?
3. According to President Aquino, what is the celebration of the Chinese New Year a manifestation of?

Complete the following sentences:

1. There has been a significant Chinese presence in the Philippines even before the ____________________.
2. Under the Aquino administration, the Philippines began celebrating the Chinese New Year as ________________________.
3. In his declaration, Aquino said the celebration of Chinese New Year ”is a manifestation of _________________________.”

Comment on the following Quotes:

1. “To become a true global citizen, one must abandon all notions of 'otherness' and instead embrace 'togetherness'. ” -Suzy Kassem
2. “We may have different religions, different languages, different colored skin, but we all belong to one human race.” -Kofi Annan
3. “No culture can live if it attempts to be exclusive.” -Mahatma Gandhi
Discussion Questions:

1. Do you know any Japanese tradition or celebration that is observed by people outside of Japan? Similarly, do you know a foreign tradition or celebration that is observed in Japan?
2. What can you say about cultural diversity?
3. What Japanese celebration or tradition are you most proud of? Discuss.