Traveling frog stimulates reflection

2018-01-30

By Zhang Ruinan in New York |   
 China Daily USA |  
 Updated: 2018-01-30 23:20

A mobile game featuring a traveling frog has become a hit among Chinese young people, and overseas Chinese students who are thousands of miles away from home especially feel emotionally attached to it.  
The game, called Tabi Kaeru, or Travel Frog, was created by a Japanese game company called Hit-Point.  
According to The New York Times, the Travel Frog had risen to the top of the free simulation game category in Apple's App Store in China. And it is being widely discussed on social media, where users post photos of their frogs' adventures.  
In the game, players can name a frog and help it prepare food and a series of travel items such as tents and bottles for a short trip.  
However, gamers have no control over where the frog will go or when it departs or returns. While the frog travels to different places, all players can do is wait at home.  
And if the gamers are lucky enough, they might receive postcards and items from the frog showing where it has been.  
Many young Chinese find this kind of less stressful lifestyle is very attractive, and the game requires only the minimum time and is easy to play; more overseas students believe the frog is a reflection of themselves, which stimulates nostalgia and homesickness.  
"My frog has been away from home for two days, and I was so worried about him all the time," said Sara Lin, a 22-year-old graduate student at New York University.  
Like many other players, she intimately calls the frog her "frog son" and shows the postcards sent by the frog on all her social media.  
"I started to think whether they prepared enough food, or if my frog son is sleeping well," Lin added. "But it was only two days when he left home; I've been in the US for five years - suddenly I understand why my mother wants me to call her every day."  
Lin said she used to call her mother once a week, but after she started to play the game, she tries to call back every two days.  
Linda Xu, who graduated from Columbia University last year and works for a marketing company in New York, is also addicted to the mobile game.  
"The most exciting part about this game is waiting for your frog to send you postcards from different places," Xu said. "I traveled to lots of places around the US in the past two years, but I didn't send many photos to my parents and my grandmother, now I regret it, and I will send more photos back next time when I travel."  
"Sometimes I feel the frog represents us - the overseas students; our parents prepared everything for us at home and once we left home, they can do nothing but wait for our messages through WeChat and expect us to go back every vacation," said Zhang Qiaoxin, a graduate student at New York University.  
"I'm going back home this spring break and will bring my parents some famous food from New York as my frog does every time when he comes back."

http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201801/30/WS5a708d3ea3106e7dcc137add.html