

**Above:** (From left) Li Jingjing, Fu Yan, Mo Shaoyin and Zhao Binghua display pages from ancient books they restored in a restoration room at the Hainan Provincial Museum in Haikou, Hainan province, on Nov 11. **Right:** A restorer tidies up pieces of bronzeware ready to be cataloged after restoration on Nov 11. PHOTOS BY ZHANG MAO / FOR CHINA DAILY

# Putting the shine back on beauties from the past

Restoration is a complicated, lengthy process, but rewards well worth the effort

By ZHANG MAO and CHEN LIANG

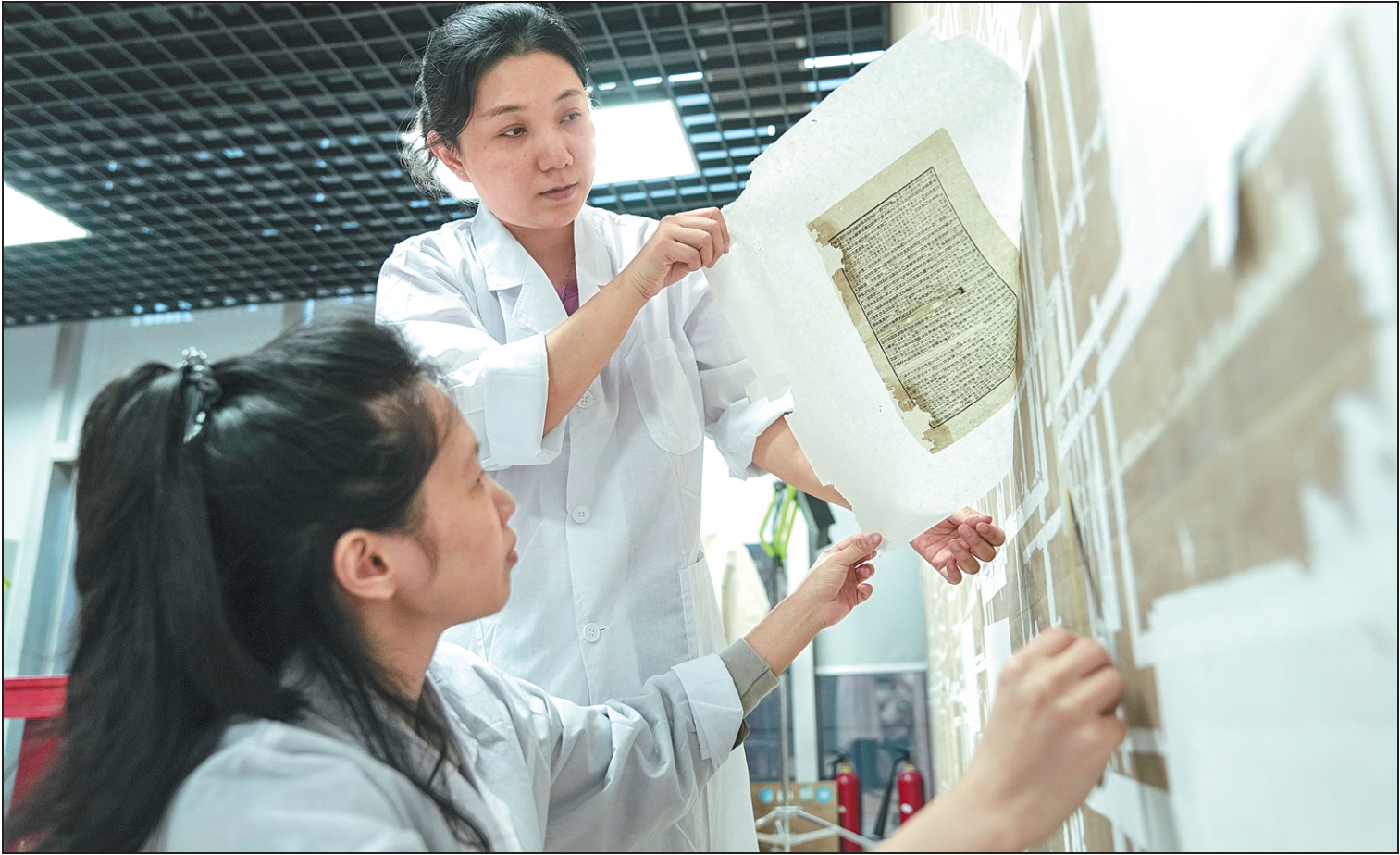
The Hainan Provincial Museum recently completed the restoration of 31 valuable cultural artifacts in its collection. A variety of treasures have been restored to their original appearance, including pieces of bronzeware, china-ware, wood carvings, leather-wear and ancient books.

The museum's restoration rooms resemble a hospital for artifacts. Broken objects lie on tables and wait for treatment by the restorers.

Ancient books are taking up a large part of this year's project, posing a major challenge to restorers. Restoring them properly is a 10-part process that includes removing dust, disassembling the books, cleaning them with water and punching and rebinding the pages. It is an arduous operation.

"Restoration is the way to lengthen an artifact's life," said Fu Yan, one of the museum's restorers.

"The process is long and complicated and requires restorers to be very patient."



Restorers remove pages from ancient books that had been allowed to dry on a wall for a few days on Nov 11.



A restorer prepares a paste that will be used to restore ancient books.



A restorer carefully checks the surface of an artifact before starting restoration.



**From left:** Restorers move artifacts into a restoration room from a warehouse. A restorer repaints a wood plaque. Fu Yan cleans the surface of a bronze artifact with a brush.