

= Adolfo Farsari =

Adolfo Farsari (Italian pronunciation : [aˈdolfo farˈsaːri] ; 11 February 1841 ? 7 February 1898) was an Italian photographer based in Yokohama , Japan . His studio , the last notable foreign @-@ owned studio in Japan , was one of the country 's largest and most prolific commercial photographic firms . Largely due to Farsari 's exacting technical standards and his entrepreneurial abilities it had a significant influence on the development of photography in Japan .

Following a brief military career , including service in the American Civil War , he became a successful entrepreneur and commercial photographer . His photographic work was highly regarded , particularly his hand @-@ coloured portraits and landscapes , which he sold mostly to foreign residents and visitors to the country .

Farsari 's images were widely distributed , presented or mentioned in books and periodicals , and sometimes recreated by artists in other media ; they shaped foreign perceptions of the people and places of Japan and to some degree affected how Japanese saw themselves and their country .

= = Early years = =

Adolfo Farsari was born in Vicenza , Lombardy @-@ Venetia (then part of the Austrian Empire , now in Italy) . He began a career in the Italian military in 1859 but emigrated to the United States in 1863 and , a fervent abolitionist , Farsari served with the Union Army as a New York State Volunteer Cavalry trooper until the end of the American Civil War . He married an American , but the marriage failed and in 1873 he left his wife and two children and moved to Japan .

Based in Yokohama , Farsari formed a partnership with E. A. Sargent . Their firm , Sargent , Farsari & Co . , dealt in smokers ' supplies , stationery , visiting cards , newspapers , magazines and novels , Japanese and English conversation books , dictionaries , guidebooks , maps , and photographic views of Japan . The creator of these photographs remains unknown , but Farsari was the maker of at least some of the maps , notably of Miyanoshita (in the Hakone resort area) and Yokohama . After his partnership with Sargent ended , the company , now A. Farsari & Co . , published successive editions of Keeling 's Guide to Japan and Farsari himself wrote and published Japanese Words and Phrases for the Use of Strangers . The firm was among the most prolific publishers of materials to aid travellers , having produced its first guidebook to Japan by July 1880 .

= = Photographic career and studio = =

Farsari expanded his business interests into commercial photography and taught himself photography in 1883 . In 1885 he formed a partnership with photographer Tamamura Kozabur? to acquire the Stillfried & Andersen studio (also known as the Japan Photographic Association) , which had some 15 Japanese employees . The studio 's stock included images by Felice Beato that it had acquired along with Beato 's studio in 1877 . It is not clear how long the partnership of Tamamura and Farsari lasted , for within a few years they were in competition with each other . Farsari further expanded his business in 1885 when the Yokohama Photographic Company (owned by David Welsh) folded and Farsari acquired its premises (next door to his own) and moved in . In addition to his Yokohama studio , Farsari likely had agents in Kobe and Nagasaki . By the end of 1886 , Farsari and Chinese photographer Tong Cheong were the only foreign commercial photographers still operating in Japan , and by the following year even Tong Cheong had gone .

In February 1886 a fire destroyed all of Farsari 's negatives , and he then toured Japan for five months taking new photographs to replace them . He reopened his studio in 1887 . Despite his losses in the fire , by 1889 Farsari 's stock comprised about 1 @,@ 000 Japanese landscapes and genre portraits .

Following the innovations of Felice Beato and Baron Raimund von Stillfried , Farsari further developed the trade in photograph albums . His studio generally produced sepia monochrome albumen prints that were hand @-@ coloured and mounted on album leaves . These pages were often hand decorated and bound between covers of silk brocade or lacquer boards inlaid with ivory ,

mother @-@ of @-@ pearl and gold . Like his contemporaries , Farsari usually captioned and numbered his photographs in the images , often in white lettering on a black background .

Farsari sold many of these photograph albums , particularly to foreign residents and visitors . He employed excellent artists who each produced high @-@ quality work at a pace of two or three hand @-@ coloured prints per day . Farsari ensured that the colours were true to life and that the best materials were used . Accordingly , his work was expensive , yet popular and often praised by clients and visitors to Japan , even receiving a glowing reference by Rudyard Kipling following his 1889 visit to Yokohama . That same year , Farsari presented a deluxe photograph album to the King of Italy . By the 1890s , the studio 's high reputation earned it exclusive rights to photograph the Imperial Gardens in Tokyo .

Prospective colourists at A. Farsari & Co. were interviewed by Farsari himself , who ensured they were familiar with Japanese painting techniques . Once hired , they were given unpaid instruction for several months , and then a basic salary that steadily increased as Farsari became satisfied with their work . A capable and loyal colourist could earn twice the rate offered at other Yokohama studios and double his own daily rate for work on Sundays . Colourists also received regular bonuses and gifts . On the other hand , Farsari complained in a letter to his sister that to motivate his employees he had to rage , swear and beat them , which he did according to a fixed schedule . By 1891 A. Farsari & Co. had 32 employees , 19 of whom were hand @-@ colouring artists .

In 1885 Farsari had a daughter , Kiku , by a Japanese woman whom he may not have married . He described himself as living like a misanthrope , associating with very few people outside of business , and his correspondence indicates that he increasingly hoped to return to Italy . He tried to regain the Italian citizenship lost when he emigrated to the United States , and he even hoped to be made a cavaliere and thereby join the Italian aristocracy . His success in these endeavours is not clear . Nevertheless , in April 1890 he and his daughter left Japan for Italy . On 7 February 1898 Farsari died in his family home in Vicenza .

Following Farsari 's departure from Japan in 1890 , his studio continued to operate and even listed him as proprietor until 1901 , when Tonokura Tsunetar? became the owner . Tonokura , whom Farsari had known since the mid @-@ 1870s , had long managed the day @-@ to @-@ day operations of the studio . In 1904 Tonokura left the business to start his own studio and another of Farsari 's former employees , Watanabe Tokutar? , became the new owner , only to be succeeded by the former secretary , Fukagawa Itomaro . The business was finally registered as a Japanese company in 1906 and it continued to operate until at least 1917 and possibly as late as 1923 , the year in which Yokohama was largely destroyed by the Great Kant? earthquake . A. Farsari & Co. was the last notable foreign @-@ owned photographic studio to operate in Japan .

= = Farsari and Yokohama shashin = =

Farsari expressed his view of photography in a letter to his sister , writing , " taking pictures is just a mechanical thing . " In describing his development as a photographer , he wrote , " I have had no real teachers , I have learned everything from books . I bought all the necessary equipment and with no help from anyone , I printed , took photographs and so on . Then I taught others . "

Farsari did not work in isolation . The works (particularly those that were hand @-@ coloured) and practices of the many foreign and Japanese commercial photographers who operated in Yokohama from the 1860s to the 1880s have been termed Yokohama shashin (literally , " Yokohama photographs " or " photography ") . Farsari and its other practitioners ? notably Beato , Stillfried , Tamamura , Kusakabe Kimbei , Ogawa Kazumasa , and Uchida Kuichi ? produced works that in their subject matter , composition and colouring present a striking combination of the conventions and techniques of Western photography with those of Japanese artistic traditions , particularly ukiyo @-@ e . These photographers also provided the key images by which Meiji @-@ era Japan and the Japanese were known to people in other countries . Their images also changed the ways in which Japanese saw their own country . Through their images , foreign photographers publicised sites that interested them , sometimes drawing Japanese attention to hitherto neglected locations . One was the now @-@ important " Daibutsu " (great Buddha) at K?toku @-@ in , Kamakura . In a similar

vein , Farsari 's and others ' photographs of the mausoleums of T?sh? @-@ g? made the once restricted site familiar to a wider audience .

Farsari and other 19th @-@ century commercial photographers generally concentrated on two types of subject matter : the scenery of Japan and the " manners and customs " of its inhabitants . Such subjects , and the ways in which they were literally and figuratively framed , were chosen to appeal to foreign taste ; and the reason for this , apart from the photographer 's individual aesthetics , vision and preconceptions , had much to do with economics . Photographs were expensive to make and accordingly expensive to buy . In 1870s Japan , a portrait photograph usually cost half a ry? " per head " , about a month 's pay for an artisan . Given such pricing , few Japanese could afford photographs and a photographer 's clientele was largely drawn from the foreign residents of the European and American enclaves : colonial administrators , missionaries , merchants and the military . By the early 1870s , tourists had joined their number . To appeal to this clientele , photographers often staged and contrived the scenes they photographed , particularly the portraits depicting " manners and customs " .

In 1885 , Charles J. S. Makin used some of Farsari 's views to illustrate his travel account *Land of the Rising Sun , Being a Short Account of Japan and the Japanese* . As photomechanical printing was still in its infancy , it was common for artists and illustrators to create works derived from photographs . For example , Charles Wirgman 's numerous engravings for the *Illustrated London News* were made from views by Wirgman 's friend and sometime partner Felice Beato . Occasionally the link between a work of art and its photographic source material was less overt : Louis @-@ Jules Dumoulin 's 1888 oil painting *Boys ' Festival from the Bluff , Yokohama* [sic] (now called *Carp Banners in Kyoto*) draws heavily from Farsari 's photograph *Gionmachi , Kioto* (now often called *View of Shij? @-@ d?ri , Kyoto*) ; although the painted image strongly resembles the photographic source , the location of the subject has been changed in the title .

During the era of the collodion process , before the arrival of less demanding photographic technology (the gelatin silver process , photographic film , and smaller cameras) and the consequent rise of amateur photography , commercial photographers like Farsari had a particular importance for recording events and views . In Japan before 1899 such photographers were even more significant because the government required foreigners to obtain passes to journey to the interior , and commercial photographers based in Japan could more easily gain access and provide rare images of restricted areas . By 1889 , however , Farsari estimated that about half of all visitors to Yokohama were amateur photographers ; even if this was an exaggeration , the presence of increasing numbers of amateur photographers was obviously having an impact on the commercial photography business . To encourage amateur photographers to visit his studio and possibly buy his merchandise , Farsari provided free use of a darkroom .

Attribution is often difficult with Farsari 's photographs because 19th @-@ century photographers frequently acquired each others ' images and sold them under their own names . This may be due to the commonplace exchange of stock and negatives between various commercial photographers , or due to the number of freelance amateurs who sold their work to more than one studio . Thus a photograph identified as by Farsari might actually be by Beato , Stillfried & Andersen or Kusakabe . A case in point is the photograph of an Officer 's Daughter , variously attributed to Farsari , Stillfried , Kusakabe or even Suzuki Shin 'ichi .

The lifetime of A. Farsari & Co. spanned the transition of Japanese photography from the early involvement and influence of foreign photographers to the emergence of an independent , native Japanese photographic identity . Coming after the first generation of photographers , the firm made significant contributions to the development of commercial photography in Japan by emphasising the excellence of materials , refining the practice of presenting photographs in albums (which became art objects in themselves) , and making effective use of Farsari 's own tourist @-@ oriented publications to promote his photographic studio 's work ? an early , minor example of vertical integration .

= = Evaluations of his work = =

In its time , the work of A. Farsari & Co. was highly regarded and popular . Besides Kipling 's endorsement , photographer and prolific photography writer W. K. Burton published an appraisal in an 1887 article : " I have seen no better work in the way of coloured photographs anywhere than some of Farsari 's productions " . In the same year , an admiring review of Farsari 's work appeared in the journal Photographic Times and American Photographer , describing it as " technically almost perfect " and showing " artistic proportion " in the selection of subjects , depicting Japanese life and providing images of the natural beauty of a country that was admittedly unfamiliar to Americans .

Later opinions have been divided . In a 1988 article , art and photography historian Ellen Handy described A. Farsari & Co. as having become " well @-@ known for issuing albums of landscape views in great quantity , but without regard for print quality and delicacy of hand @-@ colouring " . Terry Bennett , a specialist in the early photography of Asia , refers to Farsari 's work as " inconsistent and lacking the quality found in the photography of Beato , Stillfried or Kusakabe . " But Bennett also notes that Farsari employed excellent artists , used the best paper and produced some " stunningly coloured photographs " . For historian Sebastian Dobson , the artistic and historical significance of the work of Farsari (and other Yokohama photographers of his era , particularly Kusakabe and Tamamura) is rightly undergoing re @-@ evaluation after many years in which it was dismissed as tourist kitsch and " perceived by some as pandering to nineteenth @-@ century Western notions of exoticism " . Farsari 's photographs and albums are included in numerous museums and private collections around the world , and a selection of his works was exhibited at the Museum of Fine Arts , Boston in 2004 .

= = Selected photographs and other items = =

Photographs are indicated by Farsari 's titles , followed by the date of exposure , the photographic process , and a descriptive title .