Focused on the Japanese daimyō (hanshu and zen’hanshu) in the middle and the late Edo period han system, specifically their political position, power situation and relations with the Tokugawa Bakufu, the present research studies the cases of the 10th and 11th daimyō of the Hachisuka family, Hachisuka Shigeyoshi and Hachisuka Haruaki.

Political history research of daimyō families during the early modern period has been a rich field since the 1950s, with numerous works dedicated to the study of territorial administration and groups of vassals, but there are many issues related to the power of the daimyō that are still to be investigated. First, many works are focused in the early Edo period, during the establishment of the han political system, with little done for the middle and later periods. Second, although research has been done on the prominence of the daimyō who put forward reforms during the middle Edo period, there is still little known concretely on the structure that allowed local powers to be exercised. Third, there is much to be researched regarding the political position and role of retired han lords. Fourth, the relation between the political orientation of the Bakufu and the reforms promoted by han lords has not been analyzed in depth. Considering these issues, the present dissertation analyses the political powers of the daimyō during the middle and late Edo period.

The dissertation is divided in seven chapters. The introduction presents the issues and development of the research of daimyō, as well as the issues, analysis methodology and structure of the present dissertation.

The first chapter introduces the Hachisuka family and offers a panorama of the Tokushima han while presenting results from past research on the region. "Political
order of the Tokushima han until the Hōreki era", analyzes the political power of the local lord (hanshu) from the first to the eight daimyō (Yoshishige and Muneshige, respectively) and the establishment and development of the punishment system by local ministers (karō). This section also analyzes the political situation of the Tokushima han until Hachisuka Shigeyoshi became the local lord.

The second chapter considers the situation inside the Tokushima han during the Hōreki era, which sparkled the momentum for han reform under Shigeyoshi. Next, evaluating the period right after Shigeyoshi became the hanshu, the chapter analyzes his political position and how Shigeyoshi revived the punishment system, which had been interrupted since the time of the fifth hanshu, Tsunanori. Special attention is dedicated to the power struggle between Shigeyoshi with his ministers (karō) and vassals (kinji).

The third chapter clarifies the process until Shigeyoshi was ordered by the Bakufu to retire in the tenth month of the sixth year of the Meiwa era (October 1769), analyzing the correspondence between officials of the Tokushima han and Hasegawa Taro, Hatamoto of Matsumae who was sent to the han's mansion by the Bakufu's councilor (rōchu) Matsudaira Takechika, and understanding the reasons behind the Bakufu's order of retirement for Shigeyoshi, considering the Bakufu's policies towards the daimyō during the Meiwa era.

The fourth chapter analyzes changes in the political situation of the han after Hachisuka Shigeyoshi's retirement and the political movements by high-ranking officials related to the Hachisuka family, taking into account the direction taken by the political reforms implemented by Shigeyoshi.

The fifth chapter uses the case of Hachisuka Shigeyoshi to analyze the political situation and stance of retired daimyō in the han system of the late Edo period, by questioning its meaning to the han.

The sixth chapter analyzes the activities of spies (oniwaban) sent all around the country by Matsudaira Sadanobu, starting the ninth month of the seventh year of the Tenmei era (circa October 1787). From that analysis, the chapter clarifies the interrogation of a spy discovered about Shigeyoshi. From that perspective, the meaning and administrative measures taken by Sadanobu's daimyō during the period of reforms of the Kansei era are analyzed.

The seventh chapter considers how the eleventh hanshu of Tokushima, Haruaki, guaranteed the establishment of the "jikishioki" system. It also analyzes and considers the historical importance of the case of Hasegawa Oumi, an important councilor of the han (shioki karō), and the relation of Matsudaira Sadanobu to the case.