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Let  $X = G/K$  be a symmetric space of the non-compact type. For  $f \in \mathcal{E}(X)$  and a fixed point  $y \in X$ , the mean value  $M^y f$  is the function on  $X$  given by

$$M^y f(gK) = \int_K f(gk \cdot y) dk \quad g \in G.$$

We show that the mean value operator  $f \mapsto M^y f$  is surjective on  $\mathcal{E}(X)$  if  $X$  is either complex or of rank one. For general higher rank symmetric spaces  $X$  we show that  $M^y$  is surjective if  $y$  is  $K$ -conjugate to a point in an appropriate Weyl subchamber. For a fixed  $K$ -invariant distribution  $\mu \in \mathcal{E}'(X)$  we also show that Ehrenpreis' slow decrease condition on its spherical Fourier transform is a sufficient condition for convolution with  $\mu$  to be surjective on  $\mathcal{E}(X)$ . (Received September 09, 2016)