

Chapter 8

A Preliminary Study on the Official Paper Documents of the Mysore Kingdom from the Eighteenth to the Early Nineteenth Century: With Special Reference to the *Nirūpas* (Written Orders)*

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Introduction

The Mysore Kingdom was one of the most powerful regional states that flourished in South India after the decline of the Vijayanagara Empire, and it survived colonization to be one of the largest princely states under the protection and control of the British colonial state. In that kingdom, various kinds of official paper documents came into use after the eighteenth century; one of the most common types found so far is called *nirūpa*. *Nirūpa* is originally a Sanskrit word meaning “order” or “injunction,” and it has been borrowed into many vernacular languages of South Asia, including Kannada, in which most (not all) paper documents of the Mysore Kingdom were written. This chapter attempts to clarify the format and content of *nirūpa* documents and discuss their characteristics and functions as official documents. In the context of the present study, *nirūpas* refer to those documents addressed to government officials by kings or de facto rulers with the intention of communicating their decisions and giving commands. These documents are mostly called *nirūpas* in their own texts, but those issued by de facto rulers generally do not refer to themselves as *nirūpas*, as will be elucidated later. It is hoped that this study will be the groundwork for a future, full-scale investigation into the official paper documents of the Mysore Kingdom.

A historical work titled *The Family Genealogy of Reverend Great Kings* (Śrīman-mahārājaravara Vaṃśāvalī)¹ was the final output of the long-term project that involved compiling the history of the Mysore Kingdom in Kannada prose, conducted under the auspices of the government of Princely Mysore. According to it, King Chikka Deva Raja (r. 1673–1704, Cikka Dēva Rāja) established, as central governmental organizations, 18 departments (*cāvaḍis*), including the *Nirūpa* Department (*Nirūpada Cāvaḍi*), and ordained that “the scribes (of that department) read out (to the king) petitions sent from governmental departments including county offices, write *nirūpas* according to the instructions (of the

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¹ Better known by its English subtitle, *Annals of the Mysore Royal Family*.

king), and send them to the persons concerned after having the royal signature and seal put on them” [SMV, 146–147]. Of the *nirūpas* and their copies found so far, the oldest is the one issued by King Chikka Deva Raja in 1677 [EC 5, Ag-2]; this is in agreement with the historical work attributing the establishment of the *Nirūpa* Department to that king.² The administrative organizations arranged by King Chikka Deva Raja were—at least partly—inherited (or restored) by the government of Princely Mysore in the colonial period, despite the thorough administration reform by Tipu in the late eighteenth century. *Nirūpas* also continued to be prepared and issued until 1831, when the British took direct administrative control of Princely Mysore on the pretext of royal misrule, which allegedly led to large-scale rebellion within the state.

Official paper documents including *nirūpas* were found during the field research conducted by the Archaeological Department of the government of Princely Mysore in the early twentieth century, and their contents were presented rather minutely in the department’s annual reports.³ *Epigraphia Carnatica*, which started to be compiled and published in the late nineteenth century, also contained the texts of a few paper documents. The search and collection of paper documents, however, was never conducted systematically. The main objects of the Archaeological Department’s field research were inscriptions and architectural monuments; paper documents were reported only if they were found by chance, and the Department never planned to search and collect them in a comprehensive manner. The new and revised edition of *Epigraphia Carnatica*, published since the 1970s, completely omits paper documents contained in the original editions, along with inscriptions that can be found only in the form of copies. Although this policy of revision itself is appropriate for the corpus of inscriptions, it seems to symbolize the excessive dependence on the inscriptions and the relative indifference shown to other source materials in historical studies on premodern South India. To my knowledge, official paper documents of the Mysore Kingdom have never been compiled in book form. Of the documents referred to in the *Annual Reports*, some may have been lost, and some may have been placed in unknown locations to this day. While this has been the state of the collection and preservation of historical paper documents to date, the documents kept in Śṛṅgēri Monastery (*maṭha*) have been exceptionally well preserved. Being a center of the Smārta sect, which is one of the most prestigious orders of Hinduism, the monastery has received many documents from various people, including rulers of Deccan and South India, and has kept them or their

² The original edition of *Epigraphia Carnatica* referred to this *nirūpa* of King Chikka Deva Raja as “[c]opy of śāsana [i.e., inscription]” “[s]upplied by the people of the village” of Arakalagud. Its authenticity is not beyond doubt when we take into consideration that it mentioned the title of the king while most *nirūpas* did not, and that it contained the word *nakhalu* meaning copy, which became a part of common vocabulary of *nirūpas* only in the nineteenth century. The earliest original edict so far found is the one issued by King Kanthirava Narasa Raja II (r. 1704–1714, Immaḍi Kaṁthīrava Narasa Rāja) in 1707 [MAR 1928, 53–54 (No. 47)].

³ Titled *Annual Report of the Mysore Archaeological Department*. Hereafter, it is shortened as *Annual Report*.

copies in good condition. Recently, A. K. Shastry has studied these documents thoroughly and published select ones, and it seems that most of the paper documents issued by the kings and officials of the Mysore Kingdom have already been published [Śāstri 2006; Shas-try 2009]. They are also used as source materials for this study.

Hayavadana Rao, in his main work *History of Mysore*, an indispensable reference work for all those interested in premodern Mysore, mentions and uses a few *nirūpas* as source materials, but he does not discuss their format and characteristics as historical documents. In subsequent research on the history of the kingdom, *nirūpas* have been referenced, but research on the *nirūpas* themselves is almost nonexistent.⁴ Paper documents issued by not only the Mysore Kingdom but also other contemporary states of Deccan and South India have not received the scholarly attention that they deserve, except for those Persian documents of the Nizamate of Hyderabad following the Mughal forms and formulae, which have been collected in the archives and studied from a specialist point of view [Hyder 2002]. As for paper documents written in vernacular languages such as Kannada, no substantial study on them seems to have been published so far in English.

The following sections will present examples of *nirūpas* and will then examine their formal characteristics, addressees and typical contents. In addition, comparisons will be made with other official paper documents and inscriptions where appropriate.

1. Two Samples of *Nirūpas*

In this section, two *nirūpas* issued in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, respectively, are presented as samples. First, the following is the translation of a Kannada *nirūpa* issued by Krishna Raja II (r. 1734–1766, Immaḍi Kṛṣṇa Rāja) in 1760 [MAR 1916, 40–41 (Plate 16.1); Shastry 2009, 229–230 (No. 137)]. At the top of the paper is a seal that reads “Śrī Kṛṣṇa” in Dēvanāgarī scripts within a round frame. Below it, the name of issuer is written with the Kannada honorific plural suffix *avaru*, and the text follows as below.

On the 5th day of the dark fortnight of Bhādrapada in the year Vikrama [corresponding to September 29, 1760], His Highness [Krishna Raja II], to be sent to Lakṣmīkāntai of the Management Department for the Mysore Province, had a *nirūpa* written as follows. A village whose amount of revenue assessment (*huṭṭuvali*) is 1,200 varahas⁵ located in the region under the jurisdiction (*havālu*) of the Manage-

⁴ This author has also used the *nirūpas* once in describing the institutionalization of rule in the kingdom and, in doing so, provided a brief introduction on the *nirūpas* themselves [Ōta 2001, 136–137]. This chapter is a substantially expanded version of that introduction.

⁵ *Varāha* is the name of a gold coin widely circulated in South India, which is usually called Pagoda in English documents and papers. Although *varāha* gold coins were not produced in the Mysore Kingdom, they were used as a unit of monetary value in documents and accounts.

ment Department for the Mysore Province (*Mahiśūranagarada Hōbaḷi Vicārada Cāvaḍi*) which is under your jurisdiction (*niṃna havālu*) has been granted . . . to provide expenses of eatables and votive lights offered to God Caṃdramouliśvara and Goddess Śāradā and of the Navarātri Festival in the holy monastery of Śṛṃgēri. For that reason (*āda kārana*), the command has been given (*katle māḍisi yidhitu*) to grant the village Beḷavāḍi of the Bēlūru County belonging to the Management Department as revenue-free (*sarvamānyavāgi*) for that purpose and maintain it as such. In accordance with that (*ā prakāarakakke*), the village Beḷavāḍi and its hamlets whose total amount of revenue assessment is 1,200 varahas. . . [details of revenue assessment] belonging to the Management Department for the Mysore Province must be transferred to the jurisdiction of the holy monastery (*śrīmaṭhada havālige viṃgaḍisi koḍisi*) and kept as revenue-free for ever to provide expenses of eatables and votive lights offered to God Caṃdramouliśvara and Goddess Śāradā and of the Navarātri Festival in the holy monastery of Śṛṃgēri. Boundary stones (*Vāmana mudre śilā*) must be set for the granted village and its hamlets. This *nirūpa* must be returned to the holy monastery after being copied into the ledgers (*kaḍatas*) of the [Management] Department's clerks (*Cāvaḍi karaṇikam*). For this village has been granted on Monday, the 5th day of this dark fortnight at the auspicious time of Mahālaya, [the grant of] this village and its hamlets must be carried on as a memorial service for the death of our respected father. Be it well (*Śrī*).

Śṛṃgēri Monastery, to whom the villages were donated, belongs to the Smārta sect of Hinduism. The authority and popularity of its successive heads, generally called Śaṃkarācārya, have extended across India. Even before Śṛṃgēri and its surrounding area were incorporated into the territory of the Mysore Kingdom in the early 1760s, the kingdom's ruling elites had had a close relationship with the successive heads of the monastery. "The Management Department for the Mysore Province," mentioned as the addressee's office, is one of the 18 departments presumably established during the reign of King Chikka Deva Raja as the central governmental organization. At that time, counties (*sthaḷas*) were the basic administrative units in the province; those comprising the northern half of the kingdom were organized into the Srirangapattana Province and those comprising the southern half into the Mysore Province. The two provinces were administered by two management departments at the center, respectively. Lakṣmikāṃtai (normally spelled Lakṣmikāṃtayya), the addressee, must have been a director of the department known by the name of *Pārupaṭyagāra*, though this is not explicitly mentioned. This *nirūpa* was issued to notify the director of the Management Department that the villages located in the province under his jurisdiction had been donated to Śṛṃgēri Monastery and to order him to take the steps necessary to transfer jurisdiction over the donated villages to the donee.

Next presented is the translation of a Kannada *nirūpa* issued by King Krishna Raja

III (r. 1799–1868, Mummaḍi Kṛṣṇa Rāja) in 1817 during the colonial period [MAR 1938, 129–133 (No. 21)]. At the top of the paper is also a seal, which reads “Krishna Raja Odeya, son of Sri Chama Raja Odeya (*Śrī Cāmarājavaḍera tanuja Kṛṣṇarājavaḍeru*)” in Kannada language and Dēvanāgarī characters within a round frame. Below it, the name of issuer is written with the Kannada honorific plural suffix *avaru*. Then, the text follows as below.

On Monday, the 15th day of the blight fortnight of Kartika in the year Īśvara [corresponding to November 23, 1817], His Highness [Krishna Raja III], to be sent to Canne Gauḍa, the Revenue Collector (*Āmīla*) of Būkinakere [County], had a *nirūpa* written as follows. While the village Varāhanātha Kallahalli in the county (*tāloku paiki*) was previously granted as revenue-free to provide for services of God Hayagrīva and God Lakṣmīnārāyaṇa conducted in the monastery of Reverend Brahmatamṛta Ghaṁṭāvatāra Parakāla Svāmi, the paramount preceptor to the Mysore Kingdom, now the command has been given (*appaṇe koṭiruvadu*) to donate the villages situated near that village as revenue-free to the same monastery. For the command has been given (*appaṇe koṭuyiruvadariṁda*) to make revenue-free the land comprising of seven principal villages (*asali grāma*) and four hamlets (*dākhale grāma*) . . . [details of the donated villages], whose total amount of actual income (*sāguāli*) is 530 varahas 3 hanas⁶ and 1 visa⁷ (sic), that is calculated by deducting the amount of loss (*lukasānu*), 17 varahas 9 hanas and 1 visa from the amount of revenue assessment (*bērīju*), 548 varahas 2 hanas and 1 visa, those mentioned (*sadali*) principal villages and hamlets must be transferred to the jurisdiction (*havāla māḍikoṭṭu*) of the holy monastery and kept as revenue-free from the year Īśvara without a new [confirmatory] edict being demanded (*tājā saṁnada vujūra māḍade*) every year. Have the copy (*nakalu*) of this edict (*saṁnada*) written into the account book of the clerk at the county office (*tāloku śirastāra* (sic) *daptara*), and return (*vāpasu koḍuvadu*) the original edict (*asala saṁnadu*) to the custody of the holy monastery. The 23rd day (*tāriku*) of the month (*māhe*) November (*Navaṁbara*) in the year 1817. Written by (*khatta*) Prasannaiayya, a secretary at the royal court (*Munaṣi hujūru*).

Although the text ends here, below its last line, it is written, in a different handwriting, that “[f]or the ordain has been given (*appaṇe koṭuyirumerige*) that seven principal villages and four hamlets whose total amount of revenue assessment is 548 varahas 2 hanas and 1 visa be granted as revenue-free, this must be carried on. Śrī Kṛṣṇa.”

Parakāla Monastery belongs to the Śrīvaiṣṇava sect of Hinduism and has enjoyed the prestige that the spiritual line of its heads gives it, starting with one of the noted disciples

⁶ *Haṇa* is the name of a small gold coin. It is often spelled as fanam in English documents and papers. Ten hanas were equal to a varaha.

⁷ *Viṣa* is a unit of monetary value and equal to 1/16 of a hana.

of Rāmānuja, the founder of the sect. In the early eighteenth century, the monastery moved into the territory of the Mysore Kingdom on the invitation of its king, and its successive heads became royal preceptors (*gurus*) of the successive kings of Mysore. Būkinakere was the head town of the county of the same name, comprising a part of the nowadays Mandya District. During the colonial period, the basic administrative unit in the province came to be called *tālūk*, a borrowed word from Persian. The close correspondence can be observed between the *sthaḷas* of the eighteenth century and the *tālūks* of the nineteenth century, as far as the core part of the kingdom's territory is concerned; thus, the replacement of the *sthaḷas* by the *tālūks* may be nothing more than a change in nomenclature. For governing counties (*sthaḷas* or *tālūks*), the central government appointed Revenue Collectors who oversaw civil administration, including tax collection, and Military Commanders, who were responsible for defense and the maintenance of public order. Revenue Collectors and Military Commanders were called by the Kannada names of *Pārupatyagāra* and *Gurikāra*, respectively, until Haidar Ali became the de facto ruler of Mysore. By the nineteenth century, their designations were changed to *Āmila* (or *Amiladāra*) and *Killedāra*, both of which were Persian-derived terms. This *nirūpa* was issued to notify the county's Revenue Collector that the villages located there had been donated to Parakāla Monastery and to order him to take the steps necessary to transfer jurisdiction over the donated villages to the donee.

2. Form, Language, and Style

The *nirūpas* were issued by kings (or de facto rulers) to notify government officials of their decision or intention and order them to take necessary actions. In the case of village grants, these documents were not prepared to simply record the fact of grants but to inform the government officials to whom they were issued of the kings' decision or intention of grants and order them to take the steps to officially complete the grant procedure. This is in contrast with donative inscriptions—especially those made in South India after the establishment of the Vijayanagara Empire—where the facts of grants are either written in the third person or narrated to the donees in the donors' voice. Inscriptions are made for the purposes of record and declaration, and in that respect, they are fundamentally different from the *nirūpas* prepared for communication and direction within the government organization with a king at the top.

As a medium of communication within the government organization, the *nirūpas* are concisely worded to contain only matters of business—namely, orders and their reasons or backgrounds. Contrary to donative inscriptions, in which the titles and panegyrics of the donors and donees are profusely inscribed, no or simple titles and panegyrics of the donors/issuers, donees, and addressees are mentioned in the *nirūpas*.

Despite their simplicity of wording, *nirūpa* texts are also characterized by redundan-

cy. As observed in the translations of two *nirūpas*, the same or similar wording appears more than once in a single *nirūpa*. For example, the underlined part of the *nirūpa* of 1760 seems redundant, and omitting it would cause no issue. The text includes the phrase “the command (*kaṭle*) has been given,” but who gave the command to whom in the first place is unclear. The order to the director of the Management Department, who is the addressee of the *nirūpa*, is written after the underlined part; therefore, interpreting that “the command” in the underlined part is meant to be given to the director is rather unnatural. The *nirūpa* of 1817 shows a similar redundant use of the phrase “the command (*appaṇe*) has been given.” Here, the “command” is mentioned twice, but it is also unclear who gives the “command[s]” to whom. The first “command” ordains that the additional grant be made without specifying the villages to be donated, while the second “command” includes the minute details of the villages. Why the grant’s background and particulars are explained step by step as the contents of the two different “command[s],” instead of being resolved into the content of either one “command” or the order given to the *nirūpa*’s addressee, namely, the director of the Management Department, is beyond our comprehension.

The redundancy and repetition observable in the *nirūpa* texts may be attributable to the influence of the documents of the Mughal Empire, though this remains hypothetical. In this connection, it should be mentioned that the *nirūpa* of King Krishna Raja III refers to itself as *sanad* (*saṃnadu*) in its own text. In many *nirūpas* issued by that king, including the one translated above, the word *nirūpa* is used only in the opening address part, and in the remaining part, the documents are designated as *sanads*. As shown below, Persian words designating various documents of the Mughal Empire are used in the *nirūpas* in their corrupted forms, such as *sanad*, *tākīd*, *rāhdāri*, and *yādāsh*t. It is almost certain that, to some extent, the paper documents of the Mysore Kingdom were directly or indirectly modeled on those of the Mughal Empire. *Sanads*, one of the main types of Mughal documents, designate those issued by the high officials to validate the contents of royal orders, which include orders issued in the form of *farmāns* (written edicts), and ensure that they are properly executed. Being “confirmatory orders,” *sanads* often refer to the royal edicts to be validated and repeat their texts or contents [Mohiuddin 1971, 86–87, 131]. The *nirūpas*’ reference to “command[s]” in their texts may be one of the features showing the influence of Mughal documents on the Mysore documents. As the *nirūpas* of Mysore were written under the pretext that they were issued by kings directly to officials, whose duty and responsibility was to execute royal orders, the reference to the command already given before the issuance of the *nirūpas* may have no substantial meaning or make little sense. We have not found any definite trace of the preparation of documents recording royal edicts (“command[s]”) other than the *nirūpas*. The *nirūpas* were worded as if they were issued to follow the commands already given in another form, just like the *sanads* of the Mughal Empire were issued to follow the *farmāns* (royal edicts). This may show how strenuously the documents of the Mysore Kingdom were modeled after Mughal documents.

The *nirūpa* of King Krishna Raja II, dated 1760, is not referred to as *sanad* in its own text, but it contains redundancy and repetition, just as the *nirūpa* of King Krishna Raja III, dated 1817. The redundancy and repetition in the text of the former *nirūpa* may be seen as one of features proving the influence of Mughal documents on the format and wording of the *nirūpas* of eighteenth-century Mysore.

Why the *nirūpas* to be issued by kings in the Mysore Kingdom were modeled after and called by the name of *sanads* issued by Mughal high officials, rather than *farmāns* issued by Mughal emperors, requires extended consideration from many points of view. The *nirūpas* may be characterized as documents combining the functions of both the royal edicts and administrative orders that validate and complement them. This is the tentative conclusion of this preliminary study, and needless to say, it must be proved or reconsidered by further studies.

At the beginning of the two translated *nirūpas*, the text shows blanks following the honorific prefix *śrīmatu*, which usually precedes personal names. The blank spaces should be occupied by the names of those who issued the *nirūpas*, that is, King Krishna Raja II and King Krishna Raja III, respectively; however, they are left as such, and the names of those kings are never mentioned in the texts themselves. It is known that Mughal documents, as a rule, omit the emperors' names in their texts [Mohiuddin 1971, 129]. In contrast, in South Indian inscriptions recording the gifts of Hindu monarchs, the monarchs' names were never suppressed. Thus, the omission of kings' names in the *nirūpas* of the Mysore Kingdom might be a practice adopted from the writing style of Mughal documents.

The two translated *nirūpas* contain instructions for the addressees to return the *nirūpas* to the monasteries, the grantees of the villages, after having them copied into the account books of their offices. The *kaḍata* mentioned in the *nirūpa* dated 1760 is a kind of material on which to write, often used as account book or register at government offices in South India mainly during the early modern period. It is a folded cloth, coated with black charcoal, and white limestones (called *baḷapa* in Kannada) are used to write letters and numbers on it.⁸ In the *nirūpa* dated 1817, what the copy should be written into is "the account book of the clerk at the county office." Although the *nirūpas* were addressed to government officials in their wordings, they were meant to be left in the custody of the persons or institutions for whose benefit or interest the orders given in the *nirūpas* were executed (in the case of donative *nirūpas* such as the two translated ones, the donees). This suggests that the *nirūpas* played the role of deeds, in addition to being means of communication within the government organization. This point will be further discussed later.

Almost all the *nirūpas* discovered so far were written in Kannada, the dominant language in southern Karnataka, where the central part of the Mysore Kingdom was locat-

⁸ *Kaḍata* is also spelled *kaḍita*. See, for more on *kaḍatas* and their use as account books, Hatti and Heimann [1993].

ed. The *Annual Reports* refer to a few “*nirūps*” written in Marathi during the colonial period [e.g., MAR 1912, 106]. By the early eighteenth century, a considerable part of the Mysore Kingdom’s bureaucracy came to comprise Brahmins having genealogical origins in the Marathi-speaking area, and account books at offices were sometimes written in Marathi. Given this situation, some paper documents may have been written in Marathi. However, as explained later, the nomenclature and classification of paper documents in the *Annual Reports* are not entirely reliable. The documents referred to as “*nirūps*” in them include those with different formats and those not being designated as such in their own texts. Therefore, further research is necessary to ascertain whether some *nirūpas* were indeed written in Marathi.

Thus far, this section has discussed the general features of the *nirūpas*. The remaining part addresses the differences between *nirūpas* issued in the eighteenth century and those issued in the nineteenth century. The most conspicuous distinction is in their vocabulary. The *nirūpa* dated 1817 includes many words derived from Persian, such as *asali* in *asali grāma* (principal village), *dākhale* in *dākhale grāma* (hamlet), *bērīju* (amount of assessment), *asala* (original), *nakalu* (duplicate), *śirastāru* (clerk), *daptara* (account book), *vāpasu* (return), *tāriku* (day), and *māhe* (month), which are not used in the *nirūpa* dated 1760. However, it must be mentioned that a few—though not many—loanwords from Persian, such as *havālu* (custody or jurisdiction), are used in the *nirūpa* dated 1760. Therefore, the difference is in degree rather than in kind.

At its end, the *nirūpa* dated 1817 gives the date of issue in the Western calendar and the name of the writer and his official position. The restatement of the date of issue (the date is given in the “Hindu” calendar at the beginning of the text) and the mention of the writer and his position at the end of the text are elements common to paper documents of nineteenth-century Princely Mysore. The precedents for the mention of the writer’s name at the end of the document can be found in the *manshūr* documents (see below for their details) that came to be issued by Tipu Sultan by the 1790s at the latest [Shastri 2009, 173–174 (No. 90), 192–193 (No. 104), 202–204 (Nos. 112–114), 211 (No. 123)]. Just as in the *nirūpa* dated 1817, in the *manshūr* documents, the name of a writer and his official position, namely, Secretary (*Munaṣi*) or Secretary at the court (*Munaṣi hajūraru*), are written after the word *khatta* (meaning “writer”) at the end. Thus, the precedent for the statement of the date of issue in the concluding part of the document can also be found in the *manshūr* documents of Tipu. However, in the case of the *manshūr* documents, the date is not written at the beginning but at the end only and is given in both the original calendar of Tipu and the traditional “Hindu” calendar.⁹

The *nirūpa* dated 1817 mentions that it is not necessary to demand a new document every year to confirm the grant’s continuance, while the one dated 1760 does not. As reli-

⁹ See, for the calendar created and introduced by Tipu, Hosain [1940, 161–167].

gious grants are permanent in the Hindu tradition, this mention is rather redundant and may not have meant much. The Mughal donative *farmāns* and *sanads* usually contain instructions for local officials not to demand a new document every year to confirm the grant's continuance. The *nirūpas* of the nineteenth century show, more clearly, the influence of the Mughal documents on their composition and vocabulary compared to those of the eighteenth century, and this mention may be an example of that influence.

Below the last line of the text of the *nirūpa* dated 1817 is a note in a different handwriting. Based on its content and the signature “Śrī Kṛṣṇa” at its end, it may have been written by the king to confirm the content of the *nirūpa* issued by himself. A confirmatory note such as this is also an element that appears in *nirūpas* only after the nineteenth century.

3. The Addressees

Among the various officials to which the *nirūpas* were addressed in the eighteenth century were the directors of the departments of the central government, such as the two management departments for the province, the Department of Hindu Temples (*Dēvasthānada Sīme*, designated as *Dēvasthānada Cāvaḍi* in later historical works), and the Department of Finance (*Āyakaṭṭu*, designated as *Āyakaṭṭina Cāvaḍi* in later historical works). Although some *nirūpas* were addressed to local officials, their number seems to have been less than that of *nirūpas* addressed to the directors of the departments at the center. It is not appropriate, however, to overly emphasize the number of *nirūpas* as those found so far may be only the tip of the iceberg.

Related to the grant of villages dealt with in the translated *nirūpa* dated 1760, another *nirūpa* was prepared and probably given to a local official [Shastry 2009, 229 (No. 136)]. This *nirūpa*, also issued by King Krishna Raja II on the same date, is addressed to one “Kṛṣṇai (normally spelled as Kṛṣṇayya) of Hāsana” to inform him of the grant of the village Beḷavāḍi in Bēlūru County to the monastery and order him to hand over the money already collected as land tax of the current year from that village to the monastery. It was much shorter and simpler than that addressed to the director of the Management Department at the center. Even the official position of the addressee, “Kṛṣṇai of Hāsana,” who may have been the Revenue Collector (*Pārupatyagāra*) in charge of Bēlūru County, where the villages to be donated were located, is not mentioned.¹⁰ A preliminary examination of

¹⁰ Hāsana is the head town of the county of the same name, adjoining Bēlūru County. He might have been appointed to the Revenue Collectorship of both counties or of the two counties combined into one then. A few published *nirūpas* may have been addressed to local officials. They only contain the personal names of the addressees combined with the names of the head towns of the counties where they may have been posted and omit their official positions. For examples, a *nirūpa* issued by King Chikka Deva Raja in 1677 is addressed to Hampayya of Arakalagūḍu, a *nirūpa* issued

the *nirūpas* issued in the eighteenth century suggests that until the reign of King Krishna Raja II, *nirūpas* were addressed, in principle, to the directors of the departments at the center, with adjunct *nirūpas* for local official issued in some exceptional cases. Nevertheless, it is not implausible that two *nirūpas* were prepared for all cases—one addressed to the directors at the center and the other to local officials.

In the nineteenth century, contrary to what had been the case until the reign of King Krishna Raja II, most *nirūpas* were addressed to local officials at the county level, such as the Revenue Collectors and Military Commanders. No *nirūpa* of King Krishna Raja III was found to have been issued to the directors of the central government. His *nirūpas* were addressed to either particular local officials or county-level officials all over the kingdom. One of the earliest examples of the *nirūpa* addressed to all county-level officials at once is that issued by Haidar Ali in 1780 [Shastri 2009, 165 (No. 84)], which is addressed “to Military Commanders and Revenue Collectors of all counties comprising the royal territory [of Mysore].” The phrase “of all counties comprising the royal territory” has often been found in the *nirūpas* of the nineteenth century. No *nirūpa* issued until the reign of King Krishna Raja II was found to be addressed to all county-level officials of the kingdom at once. The *nirūpas* of the nineteenth century may take their cue from those issued by Haidar Ali in terms of how they are addressed.

A *nirūpa* issued by King Krishna Raja III in 1811 is addressed to “the present and future Revenue Collectors, Military Commanders, and Directors for Affairs of Hindu Temples of the Mysore Kingdom (*Amilāne va Kiledārāne va Dēvasthāna Pārupatyagārāne hāla yistakabāla yilākhe mulaka Maisūra*)” [MAR 1938, 125 (No. 19)]. The Persian influence is particularly evident in the address part of this *nirūpa* (e.g., case endings for plural nouns and a conjunction *va*). As for the meaning of *istakabāla*, translated as “future” here, Kannada dictionaries give only “[r]eception, meeting and receiving a visitor” [e.g., Kittel 1982, 201], and the editor of the *Annual Report* interpreted and translated it in that sense. However, this Persian-derived word—at least in this context—should be interpreted in combination with the preceding Persian-derived word *hāla*, to mean “present and future.” In Mughal documents, it is common for the addressees to be designated as “present and future” incumbents of particular positions [Mohiuddin 1971, 78, 143–144], while such a way of writing an address is not found in the texts of eighteenth-century *nirūpas*. As already pointed out, the influence of Mughal documents is more evident in the format and wording of nineteenth-century *nirūpas*, and this way of writing an address is another example illustrating such influence.¹¹

by King Kanthirava Narasa Raja II in 1709 to Cāmayya of Mēlukōṭe, and a *nirūpa* issued by King Krishna Raja II in 1762 to Dēvayya of Cikkadēvarāyadurga [EC 5, Ag-2; MAR 1938, 113–115 (No. 15); Shastri 2009, 233–234 (No. 141)].

¹¹ A *nirūpa* issued by King Krishna Raja III in 1830 is addressed to “Bacche Rao, the present Revenue Collector of the Bettamamgala-Budhikōṭe County and future Revenue Collectors [of that county]” [MAR 1938, 156–159 (No. 26)].

It can be inferred that the change in the addressees to whom the *nirūpas* were issued was not merely a difference in wording but a change in the actual administrative procedures and systems. This is a subject for future research.

4. The Function as a Deed

Many of the *nirūpas*, such as the two translated ones, contain, in their concluding parts, the instruction for the addressee to have the *nirūpa* copied in the account book of his offices and “return” or hand over the “original” to the person or institution for whose benefit or interest the *nirūpa* was prepared.¹² This means that the ultimate holders of the *nirūpas*’ originals, by way of example, issued in respect of the village donations would be the donees, rather than the officials to whom they are addressed or their offices. This is confirmed by the fact that a substantial portion of the *nirūpas* found so far had been kept in temples (or their officials) and monasteries. It can be safely concluded that from the time of their preparation, the *nirūpas* were anticipated to be finally left in the donees’ custody and serve as deeds for the donated villages on which the donees, if necessary, could base claims of right.

The texts of the *nirūpas* usually state that the *nirūpas* are to be “returned” after being copied into the ledgers of the government offices. As mentioned above, it is assumed that the *nirūpas* are to be “returned” to the donees, or beneficiaries, for whose interest the *nirūpas* were issued. The expression “returned” here suggests that the officials received the *nirūpas* from the beneficiaries. If this supposition is correct, the *nirūpas*, although addressed to the officials, were handed to the beneficiaries immediately after their preparation and carried by the beneficiaries to the offices/officials to whom they were addressed. It is

¹² Few government ledgers or account books in which *nirūpas* were copied have been found so far. Recently, what appears to be an account book of the Hangala County office in the southern part of the present-day Nanjangud District has been published, in which a few copies of the *nirūpas* issued during the reign of King Chikka Deva Raja can be found [Bhānumati 2011]. This book was discovered and added to the Mackenzie Collection in the early British period. Hayavadana Rao also utilized it as a source in his main work, *History of Mysore* [Rao 1943–1948, I, 384, 386]. The printed book is fragmentary, and contains no copies of the *nirūpas* issued after the eighteenth century. A *nirūpa*-like document issued by Purnayya, the Premier (*Dīvān*) of the Mysore Kingdom in 1800s, was found in a Jain monastery at the famous Jain pilgrimage site Shravanabelagola. It notifies that villages in the Kikkēri County have been donated to the monastery and orders the execution of the necessary procedures for the donation [EC 2 (rev. ed. 1923), SB-353]. Below the last line of its text are several signatures and notes in different handwritings from the text, and one of the notes reads: “The received date (*paivastaki*), Friday, the 10th day of the dark fortnight of the month Phalguna. Registered at the county [office] (*staḷa dākalu*).” Since the *nirūpa* was issued on Wednesday, the eighth day of the same fortnight, this note would presumably indicate that, two days after its issuance, the *nirūpa* arrived at the Kikkēri County office to which it was addressed and was copied into the ledger at the office. Thus, after its content was registered at the county office, the *nirūpa* was handed over to the donee, the Jain monastery, and was kept by it. See below details on Purnayya and his documents.

argued that the business of the *Nirūpa* Department included sending *nirūpas*; however, how the *nirūpas* were actually delivered to the addressed officials is one of the issues for further study.

In the *Annual Reports*, the *nirūpas* are also referred to as *sanads*. The interchangeable usage of *sanad* and *nirūpa* is found in the texts of the *nirūpas* themselves, as already mentioned. The term *sanad*, in addition to its limited meaning as a type of document issued by the Mughal high officials, called *parvāncha*, also has a broad meaning as a deed. In the documents and papers related to the early British East India Company government, the term *sanad* (often spelled as *sunnad*) was used mainly in the sense of a deed issued by the native governments. Since the *nirūpas* of the Mysore Kingdom also had the role of deeds that could serve as a basis for the assertion of rights, the interchangeable usage of *sanad* and *nirūpa* in the *Annual Reports* is not inappropriate. Nevertheless, it is important to note that in the Mysore Kingdom, a specific type of document, distinct from the *nirūpas*, functioned in a manner more similar to the *sanad* in the sense of a deed. When property was transferred or donated in the kingdom, a unique type of document different from the *nirūpa* was sometimes prepared and delivered to the transferees (the donees, in the case of donation). This document, called *sādhana*, can be characterized as a deed created primarily for clarifying the transferees' rights over the property.

The *sādhana* to be prepared at the time of donation by the king is not addressed to the official, as the *nirūpa* is, but it is worded to the donee, announcing the donation. For example, a document issued by King Krishna Raja III in 1817 [MAR 1938, 133–147 (No. 22)] states, in the first half of the document, that the king “worshipped [God Hayagrīva and God Lakṣmīnarayaṇa the head of Parakāla Monastery worshipped] and offered [to the two Gods] the *sādhana* of land donation as follows (*sāṣṭāṃggavāgi namaskariṣi bareṣi vap-pisida bhūdāna sādhana adāgi*).” In the following part, it gives details of the donation of eight principal villages and thirteen hamlets in six counties to the monastery. The *sādhana* also differs from the *nirūpa* in that it contains a series of titles and eulogies of the donor and donee, as well as Sanskrit stanzas of the invocation and incantation at the beginning and end of the document, respectively.

While differing in several respects from the *nirūpas*, the *sādhana*s share, with donative inscriptions, not only the style of writing where the donor pronounces the donation to the donee but also the practice of listing the titles and eulogies of the donor and donee. However, they also contain elements and contents not found in donative inscriptions, such as the obligations of the donee and references to the administrative procedures involved in the donation and the officials in charge of the donation's execution. For example, the *sādhana* document above mentions the administrative procedures for the donation of villages as follows: “I [that is, King Krishna Raja III] have given the *nirūpas* (*nirūpagaḷaṃnu*) to the Revenue Collectors of the said counties to place these [donated] villages under

the jurisdiction of the monastery.”¹³ The donee—the head of the monastery—is urged to “enjoy the grant . . . favoring our family with the continuous longevity and prosperity (*namma samtati pāraṃparyavāda śrēyōbbhivṛddhigōskara anugrahā māḍuttā*),” as if blessing the royal family was some sort of condition for the donation [MAR 1938, 137–138 (ll. 118–120, 133–134)]. While these contents and elements are not found in the traditional inscriptions recording village donation, they are found in Mughal documents such as the *farmāns* and *parvānchas* [Mohiuddin 1971, 132; Hyder 2002, 305]. The format and wording of the *sādhana*s may be described as hybrid, influenced by both traditional inscriptions and Mughal documents.

The Sanskrit-derived word *sādhana* has multiple meanings, and a leading modern Kannada dictionary gives one of them as “document (*dākhale*), or deed (*dastāvēju*)” [SKN, 1281]. However, the famous Kannada dictionary edited by Kittel in the nineteenth century gives, as one meaning of that term, only “a document” without specifying its kind or type [Kittel 1982, 1540]. The original Sanskrit term does not seem to have even that meaning, but it is noteworthy that “proof” is given as one of its numerous meanings in Sanskrit dictionaries [e.g., Macdonell 1929, 346]. When and how this Sanskrit-derived term acquired the meaning of document or deed in Kannada needs to be clarified by future studies.

In the abovementioned *sādhana* of King Krishna Raja III, dated 1817, the text is followed by a note in a different handwriting, possibly that of the king, where the document is referred to as a “*śāsana* of land donation (*bhūdānada śāsana*)” [MAR 1938, 139 (ll. 33–34)]. The word *śāsana* is also of Sanskrit origin and generally means instruction or command, but it is often used to mean an inscription. Interestingly, some inscriptions of the Mysore Kingdom refer to themselves as “*sādhana*” in their own texts [e.g., EC 4 (rev. ed. 1975), Ch-197 (AD 1762)]. A detailed comparison between the *sādhana* documents and inscriptions may provide important clues and information to solve various problems, including the origin of the usage of the term *sādhana*, meaning document or deed, in Kannada.

In the *Annual Reports*, the *sādhana* documents are also referred to as “*sanads*” and are lumped together without distinction with the *nirūpas*. Indeed, as *sanad* came to broadly mean a deed made by native powers, especially in the documents and papers of the British colonial government, the *sādhana* documents fall under *sanad* in this sense.¹⁴ As we have seen, the *nirūpas* are sometimes referred to interchangeably as *sanads* in their own texts. However, crucial differences exist between *nirūpas* and *sādhana* documents in terms of their form and fundamental function¹⁵; thus, it is not appropriate to lump them together

¹³ The *nirūpas* said to have been issued to the Revenue Collectors of the counties in this *sādhana* document have not been found.

¹⁴ No instances in the texts of the *sādhana* documents refer to the documents themselves as *sanads*.

¹⁵ At the top of the *sādhana* issued by King Krishna Raja III in 1817 are the signature of the issuer “Śrī Kṛṣṇa” in “Marathi characters” and the impression of a seal with legends in “Persian charac-

and refer to them collectively as *sanads*. When the word *sanad* is used as an analytical term in the context of research on the documents of the Mysore Kingdom, it is especially important to be clear about its meaning. Inadvertent use of that term should be avoided.

5. Written Orders Issued by Persons Other than Kings

While the *nirūpa* was, as a rule, issued by the king, some written orders of similar format and contents were also issued by high officials and de facto rulers of the Mysore Kingdom, which are addressed in this section. Since the accession to the throne of an adopted infant as King Krishna Raja II in 1734, kings became mere figureheads, and the powerful high-ranking officials held real power in state affairs for long periods of time. The seizure of power by Haidar Ali in 1761 was an extension of this trend. Tipu Sultan, successor and son of Haidar Ali, positioned himself as a monarch in name and in fact by not recognizing the accession of a new king after the death of King Chama Raja VIII (r. 1776–1796) and actively reconstructed the state's organization. When, after the end of Anglo-Mysore Wars, an infant son of the last king was enthroned as King Krishna Raja III by the British and Purnayya was nominated as the Premier (*Dīvān*) in 1799, the regime returned, in which a high-ranking official controlled all aspects of governance under a nominal king. Purnayya had exercised the power as the de facto ruler until the king's personal government commenced in 1811. Among the written orders issued by the high officials and de facto rulers of the Mysore Kingdom, this section commences with those of Purnayya that have been found in a relatively large number so far.

The *Annual Reports* referred to many “*nirūps*” issued by Purnayya. As far as ascertained by the texts of the “*nirūps*” already published, they are almost identical to the *nirūpas* issued by the kings in their format and content. However, the term *nirūpa* itself is not used in their opening address; instead, other terms are deployed to designate the documents, such as *namaskāra*, meaning salutation; *kārya*, meaning job or duty; and *āśīrvāda*, meaning benediction [Shastri 2009, 392–394 (No. 239, AD 1807); EC 2 (rev. ed. 1923), SB-353 (AD 1810); MAR 1938, 178–181 (No. 53, AD 1805)]. In one case, no word was used to designate the document in its address part: a document issued to local officials all over the kingdom in 1807 contains no word referring to itself, and its address part reads:

ters.” At the bottom are the impression of another seal with the legend “Great King Mysore Krishna Raja Odeya” in Kannada language and scripts and the signature “Śrī Kṛṣṇa” in Kannada scripts. Moreover, on the side is the impression of the seal with the legend “Krishna Raja Odeya, son of Sri Chama Raja Odeya” in Dēvanāgarī scripts. Another *sādhana* issued by the same king in 1819 has almost same set of seals and signatures on it, except that it lacks the signature “Śrī Kṛṣṇa” in Kannada scripts at the bottom [MAR 1938, 147–151 (No. 23)]. Thus, the *sādhanas* have impressions of the seals different from the ones used for the *nirūpas* issued by the same king and the royal signature in different scripts from that in the *nirūpas*. The seal on the side seems to be the same as the one used for the *nirūpas*, but the place where it is impressed is different.

“His Highness Purnayya to Military Commanders and Revenue Collectors of all counties comprising the royal territory as follows (*Śrīmatu Pūrṇaiyanavarū aramane śime gaḍigaḷa Kiledāra Amaladārrige adāgi*)” [Shastry 2009, 384 (No. 233)].

These examples of the address parts of Purnayya’s published documents suggest that his “*nirūps*” referred to in the *Annual Reports* do not contain the term *nirūpa* to designate themselves. Although these documents are not referred to as *nirūpas* in their own texts, they bear striking similarities to *nirūpas* in terms of content and format, and no *nirūpa* seems to have been issued by the king, while Purnayya issued these documents as the Premier. Thus, the documents issued by Purnayya may have functioned as a medium for transmitting the government’s supreme will, replacing the king’s *nirūpas*. It is therefore reasonable to include the Purnayya’s documents in the category of the *nirūpa* as an analytical concept, which comprises those documents issued by the government’s highest authority to transmit its commands and decisions to officials. However, those involved in the preparation and issuance of Purnayya’s documents consciously avoided calling them *nirūpas*. It is evident that the issuance of the *nirūpa* was perceived as the exclusive prerogative of the monarch. Purnayya’s documents do not suppress the name of their issuer, as those of kings do, but clearly mention it.¹⁶ This, along with the avoidance of the term *nirūpa*, would be one of the devices to clarify the position and status of Purnayya, who is not a monarch.¹⁷

A few documents issued by or to Haidar Ali after he seized real power in 1761 have been found. They can be classified into three types according to the position and status of Haidar Ali as reflected in them. The first type includes those documents where he appears as a high official serving the king. A *nirūpa* was issued by the king to him in 1763 [Shastry 2009, 234–235 (No. 142)]. The second type includes the documents issued by him as the de facto ruler. He issued a document in 1768, when two years had passed since the acces-

¹⁶ While at the top of the royal *nirūpa* is the impression of the seal showing the name of the king in Dēvanāgarī scripts, at least some *nirūpa*-like documents issued by Purnayya contain, at the top, a wax seal with the legend including a part of Purnayya’s name in Dēvanāgarī scripts, not the name itself (*Nijapūrṇa sukha śrī Lakṣmīnṛsimha*) [e.g., MAR 1938, 179].

¹⁷ The *nirūpa*-like documents issued by Purnayya are called, in their own texts, by various terms such as “salutation” and “benediction” or given no specific designation, as explained above. It is not clear what the difference between the terms means. The term *namaskāra*, meaning salutation, is used in two documents issued by a local official to others to designate those documents themselves during the period of the direct administration of King Krishna Raja III [Śāstri 2006, 279–280 (Nos. 447–448)]. These documents were issued by one “Kaṭṭe Saṃkaraya,” “Customs Superintendent (*Sarasāyira*) of Kavuledurga,” to custom collectors and clerks (*sālagatṭe maṇigārru śānabhāgarige*) of the counties adjacent to Kavuledurga in 1814. The documents seemed to instruct them to waive the collection of customs duties on goods transported to the Śṛṅgēri Monastery for the rituals of the Navarātri festival, though some parts of their texts are difficult to interpret. Their opening-address parts read “a salutation made by Kaṭṭe Saṃkaraya . . . to the custom collectors and clerks.” It is not known whether the issuance of “salutation” documents by middle level officials such as this Kaṭṭe Saṃkaraya was common practice in the eighteenth century. If so, Purnayya might have followed it and named some of his documents “salutation.” It is also possible that documents issued by middle level officials came to be called “salutation” on the model of the same named documents issued by Purnayya. However, when the issuance of the documents by middle level officials came into practice and how common it was remains unclear.

sion of the infant King Nanja Raja (r. 1766–1770) following the death of his father, King Krishna Raja II [MAR 1930, 191–192 (No. 44)]. Just like *nirūpa*-like documents issued by Purnayya, this is similar to the royal *nirūpa* in its format and content but lacks the term *nirūpa* in its opening-address part. The lack or omission thus first appeared in the documents issued by Haidar Ali and was followed by those of Purnayya. The third type of documents includes those where he appears to be a full-fledged ruler. A document issued by him to county officials all over the kingdom in 1780, when he spent his final years under the nominal king Chama Raja VIII, can be called a faultless *nirūpa* in the sense that it uses the term *nirūpa* and suppresses the name of Haidar Ali in its text [Shastri 2009, 165 (No. 84)].

Thus, the political positions of Haidar Ali reflected in his contemporary documents vary. When we arrange the documents in chronological order and trace his position in them, we can perceive a transition from high official to de facto ruler, and from de facto ruler to ruler. This is only a hypothesis based on a limited number of documents, but if such a transition had occurred, Haidar Ali would have established his position as a ruler not immediately after seizing power in 1761 but over time.

Among the documents issued by Tipu Sultan, who succeeded to his father Haidar in 1782, two published ones dated 1783 and 1785, respectively, have some features in common with the royal *nirūpas*, such as the use of the term *nirūpa* in the address part and the avoidance of naming the issuer in the text. This suggests that Tipu positioned himself as a monarch from the beginning. In addition to the *nirūpas*, Tipu issued another type of documents to officials, where the opening section including the address part is written in Persian, and the command to the officials is recorded in Kannada. These may be called *man-shūr* documents as the Persian term *manaṣūra* in its corrupted form is used in their address part to refer to themselves.¹⁸ All the *manshūr* documents found so far were issued in 1790s. It is known that Tipu conducted a large-scale reorganization of the state administration and actively promoted Persian as an official language. As part of that reformation, the *manshūr* document might have come to be prepared and issued, replacing the *nirūpas*.¹⁹

Before Haidar Ali seized power in 1761, General (*Daḷavāyi*) Deva Raja and his brother Director General (*Sarvādhikāri*) Nanja Raja had dominated the kingdom's politics

¹⁸ The term *manshūr* means “a royal mandate” or “diploma” [Steingass 1892, 1328]. In the Mughal Empire, it designated a type of *farmān* that was addressed to a distinguished person of the ruling class or imperial family [Mohiuddin 1971, 54]. The *munshūr* documents issued by Tipu included those addressed to local officials [e.g., Shastri 2009, 204 (No. 1134, AD 1792)]; thus, their functions and characters clearly differ from those of the same named documents of the Mughal Empire.

¹⁹ The concluding section of the *manshūr* document records the date of issue and the name of the writer and his official position as “Secretary (at the court).” This writing format is followed in the *nirūpas* issued by King Krishna Raja III, as already said. Persian “*sanad*” documents are also known to have been issued by Tipu [MAR 1918, 60]. Many of his Persian “letters” were translated into English and published in the early nineteenth century [Kirkpatrick 1811]. A comparison of these “letters” and the *manshūr* documents is a subject for future study.

for a long time. The *Annual Reports* also refer to the “*nirūps*” issued by both of them. However, as was the case with the Purnayya’s documents discussed earlier, the *Annual Reports* tend to introduce as “*nirūps*” documents whose content and format are similar to those of the royal *nirūpas*, even if the term *nirūpa* is not used in their texts. It would be necessary to confirm whether the “*nirūps*” issued by the brothers are referred to as such in their own texts.²⁰

6. Contents

The *nirūpas* were prepared and issued in connection with various matters of administration and governance. Those related to grants of villages and lands stand out in terms of their sheer number.²¹ Lands and villages donated to temples, monasteries, or Brahmins for religious motives were exempted from taxation by the government as a rule, but in reality, local officials often wrongly levied and collected taxes under various pretexts and names; therefore, many *nirūpas* were prepared to ensure that the tax-exempt privileges of lands and villages that had been donated in the past were respected. The village Beḷavāḍi, whose donation to Śṛṅgēri Monastery is dealt with in the translated *nirūpas* dated 1760, became the subject of another *nirūpa* addressed by King Krishna Raja II to Haidar Ali in 1763 [Shastry 2009, 234–235 (No. 142)]. In this *nirūpa*, the king explains that he received, from the monastery, notice of illegitimate tax collection in the village by the local officials of Bēlūru County, and orders Haidar to direct the officials to stop the misconduct and hand over the money illegitimately collected from that village to the monastery in writing (*koḍi-suvaṃte barasi kaḷuhisuvadu*). The same king issued another *nirūpa* in 1762 also to Haidar Ali, ordering him to send a “*tākītī*” to stop the illegal tax collection from the villages donated to Parakāla Monastery. The Persian word *tākīd*, from which the Kannada word *tākītī* (also spelled as *tākīdi* or *tākīdu*) derived, means confirming, emphasis, or reminder [Stein-

²⁰ After the resignation of Purnayya as Premier, some premiers were appointed intermittently by King Krishna Raja III. The *Annual Report* referred to a “*nirūp*” issued by one of them, Venkata Raje Arasu, to the Revenue Collector of the Harihara Country in 1830. Whether the term *nirūpa* is used in its text cannot be confirmed. It is interesting that this “*nirūp*” is said to be written in Marathi [MAR 1912, 106]. Among the documents issued by Purnayya are those written in Marathi. For example, two Marathi documents, referred to “*sanads*” in the *Annual Report*, were prepared in 1808 for the appointment of the same and one person as the Islamic Judge (Qadi) of two adjacent counties [MAR 1918, 60]. These two documents may be called appointment letters, and no other similar document is known to have existed. As their texts have not been published, who the documents are addressed to and how they are formatted cannot be ascertained. What led to the choice of Marathi as their language is an issue for further study. The *Annual Report* refers to two “*nirūps*” issued by another Premier, Linga Rajayya Arasu, to the Military Commander of the Magadi County in 1825, but the language in which these are written is not mentioned [MAR 1915, 66].

²¹ In some cases, certain amounts of money, instead of villages and lands, were granted to monasteries, and the offices whose account that money would be disbursed from were specified in the *nirūpas* [e.g., MAR 1925, 42 (No. 2, AD 1726)].

gass 1892, 276]; it was used in the Mughal Empire to designate both phrases of reminder and warning in various documents and a type of documents to be prepared to remind officials of the orders given beforehand or warn them not to deviate from orders [Hyder 2002, 318].

In the two *nirūpas* mentioned above, Haidar Ali, as a high official serving the king, is urged to call for the special attention of local officials to respect the tax-exempt privilege of villages that had already been endowed, in writing. This suggests that another type of document to call for the special attention of local officials may have been issued by high officials and called by the Persian-derived term *tākīd* on the model of the Mughal document.²² However, among all the published documents of the Mysore Kingdom, we cannot find an example of the *tākīd* document with a unique format or style, issued by a high official to give lower officials reminders or warnings.²³ No documents have been found that appear to have been issued by Haidar Ali, following the instruction given in two *nirūpas* mentioned above. Here, it would be prudent to only state that such *tākīd* documents might have been issued in the Mysore Kingdom.

In relation to religious donations, some *nirūpas* were issued to order the local officials not to collect the customs duty on goods (mainly the agricultural crops) delivered from the donated villages to the religious institutions that received them. For example, King Krishna Raja III issued a *nirūpa* to Revenue Collectors, Military Commanders, and Custom Collector all over the kingdom in 1816 and prohibited the collection of customs duty on those rice and grains delivered from the village of Hulagaḷale in Manjarabad Coun-

²² In 1768, Haidar Ali, who had established his position as the de facto ruler until then, issued a *nirūpa*-like document to Pradhāna (literally meaning “minister”) Venkappayya, informing him of the grant of lands to a monastery and ordering him to select the suitable lands and “do a *tākīd* to the county [officials],” so that they would not collect the tax on the lands [MAR 1930, (No. 44)]. This document seems to be exceptional in that it ordered the addressee to simultaneously execute the grant and call for the special attention (“do *tākīd*”) of local officials to respect the tax-exempt privilege of the donated lands. However, also in this case, *tākīd* was to be done, probably in writing, by a high official, Venkappayya, rather than by the de facto ruler, Haidar.

²³ The *Annual Report* refers to a document issued in 1815 by Lingarājaiya-arasu (Linga Rajayya Arasu), then the Governor of the Prefecture (*Fauzdār* [*Phaujudāra*]) of Bemgaḷūru. According to the *Annual Report*, it is called “this *tākīd*” in its own text [MAR 1919, 43]. The prefectures (*phaujudāri*) were administrative units above the counties, and their governors were responsible for connecting the central government with the county offices, which played a critical role in the provincial administration. As already pointed out, the nomenclature and classification of documents in the *Annual Reports* are imprecise; thus, we cannot fully rely on their report of the “*tākīd*” document issued by Linga Rajayya Arasu. While it cannot be definitively proven that the *tākīd* document was in fact prepared, some royal *nirūpas* were found to have been issued for the same purpose of alerting local officials as the *tākīd* document would have been. For example, King Krishna Raja II issued a *nirūpa* in 1762 to one “Dyāvai (Dēvayya) of Cikkadēvarāyadurga,” probably the Revenue Collector of the Cikkadēvarāyadurga County, first reprimanding him for illegally collecting money in the village donated to Śrīṃgēri Monastery and killing the Brahmins affiliated to the monastery, and then commanding him to return the illegally collected money and treat the village donated to the monastery with care [Shastri 2009, 233–234 (No. 141)]. This *nirūpa* was issued for the purpose of giving a reminder and caution to local officials, just as the *tākīd* documents would have done. However, it should be noted that it did not use the term *tākīd* in its text.

ty to Parakāla Monastery, while urging the collection of duty on those portion which were to be sold on the way [MAR 1938, 128–129 (No. 20)]. The *nirūpa* mentions that the delivery was to be conducted in accordance with the “invoice (*yādāsta*)” prepared by the officials of the monastery. The use of a Persian-derived word *yādāsta*, of which the original *yādāsh* was employed to designate various documents in the Mughal Empire, is another example illustrating the influence of Mughal documents on the documents of the Mysore Kingdom.²⁴

Some *nirūpas* were issued to ensure the safe passage of travelers. King Krishna Raja III in his letter to the head of Śṛṅgēri Monastery dated January 26, 1828, invited him to visit Mysore and told him that he had “issued a *nirūpa* of a pass (*rahadārri nirūpa*) to Revenue Collectors and Military Commanders of all counties comprising the royal territory,” ordering them to make every effort to treat him well during his tour between Śṛṅgēri and Mysore [Shastry 2009, 272–274 (No. 175)]. Correspondingly, the king indeed issued a *nirūpa* on the same day “to Revenue Collectors and Military Commanders and Custom Officers of all counties comprising the royal territory,” ordering them to do so [Shastry 2009, 274–276 (No. 176)].

The *Annual Reports* referred to the documents issued for the purpose of ensuring the safe passage of travelers as “*rahadāris*.” The expression “a *nirūpa* of a pass (*rahadāri nirūpa*)” found in the abovementioned letter suggests that no *rahadāri* document had a unique format or style, but rather, a *nirūpa* ensuring the safe passage of travelers was called *rahadāri* or *rahadāri nirūpa*. When the head of Śṛṅgēri Monastery in 1828 visited Mysore, apart from the abovementioned letter and *nirūpa*, no other document seems to have been issued to the monastery or officials for the purpose of ensuring his safe passage. In the case of village donation, although the *nirūpas* were addressed to the officials, they were ultimately kept by the donees for whose benefit the orders given in the *nirūpas* were executed. The same may have been true for the *nirūpas* issued for the safe passage of travelers. Although these were addressed to the local officials and contained the commands for them, they would be kept by the persons for whose benefit or interest the commands were executed—that is, the travelers—and literally functioned as a passport with which they would journey. It may be appropriate to position “*rahadāris*” as a subcategory of the *nirūpa* with

²⁴ The village Hulagaḷale was donated to Parakāla Monastery in 1775 by the Bēlūru Nayakas who had ruled the region, including Manjarabad County, to which the village belonged until the late eighteenth century [MAR 1938, 118–123 (No. 17)]. In 1826, King Krishna Raja III issued a *nirūpa* to the Revenue Collectors, Military Commanders, and officials of the Custom Bureau (*sāyila yilākhayavaru*) of all counties and prohibited the collection of customs duty on goods such as rice and grains delivered to Parakāla Monastery [MAR 1938, 154–156 (No. 25)]. This *nirūpa* does not name any particular village donated to the monastery. It also mentions that the delivery is to be conducted in accordance with the invoices prepared by the officials of the monastery, just like in the *nirūpa* issued in 1816 (“... do not collect customs duty on those goods which were delivered in accordance with the invoice records of the officials of the monastery (*maṭhada kāryakartugaḷa yādāstuna dākhale mērige tegeḍu koṃḍu baruvaṃthā jinasige suṃkā kēḷade*)”).

a specific content rather than as a type of document with a unique format or style.

The Persian word *rāhdāri*, from which the Kannada word *rahadāri* was derived, originally meant the customs duty and excise tax on commodities in the Mughal Empire [Habib 1999, 74]. Later, it came to designate the documents that certified the (partial) exemption of these duty and tax and were prepared for travelers on official business and merchants, including European East India Companies. These *rāhdāris* were issued by both emperors and high officials and called edict of a pass (*farmān-i-rāhdārī*) and order of a pass (*dastak-i-rāhdārī* or *parvāna-i-rāhdārī*) respectively [Mohiuddīn 1971, 62, 97–98]. While in the Mysore Kingdom, the *nirūpas* of a pass for the benefit of religious leaders, such as the head of the Śṛṅgēri Monastery, were remarkable for its sheer number, how common the issuance of a pass for the benefit of religious leaders was in the Mughal Empire remains unknown.²⁵

Some *nirūpas* of a pass were issued when members other than heads of Hindu monasteries traveled. Heads of monasteries and their agents seem to have made relatively frequent tours throughout the kingdom to collect offerings from their lay disciples and supervise them to ensure that they would not deviate from the social and religious norms established for each caste.²⁶ The *nirūpas* prepared for the benefit of these traveling members of monasteries sometimes mentioned particular reasons or social problems that required them to tour [e.g., Shastry 2009, 387–388 (No. 236)]. It may be inferred that behind the government's active cooperation to facilitate the tours was its desire to utilize them as a means of effective social control.

Another topic of the *nirūpas* deserving mention concerns Hindu temple rituals. *Nirūpas* were issued to local officials and the directors of the departments at the center, instructing them on the provision of various goods necessary for the rituals at temples and on the details of the rituals at Vishnu temples, such as the kind of hymns to be sung and the order of receiving the honor among the religious leaders [e.g., MAR 1938, 113–115 (No. 15, AD 1709); MAR 1928, 53 (No. 46, AD 1711)]. Tipu also issued a *nirūpa* in 1783 to one Kuppayya, then Director of the Hindu Temple Department (*Dēvasthānada Śīme Pārūpatyagāra*) at the center, to give instructions on the rituals to be conducted at a Vishnu temple in Melukote [MAR 1938, 123–125 (No. 18)]. A *nirūpa* issued by King Krishna Raja III to local officials and Hindu temple officials all over the kingdom in 1811 immediately after the commencement of his personal government is also concerned with the rituals

²⁵ One of the aforementioned “salutation” documents informing county custom collectors of the exemption of customs duty on goods delivered to Śṛṅgēri Monastery was copied in the *kaḍata* ledgers of the monastery with an additional note stating that “the copy of a *rahadāri* received in connection with customs duty” [Śāstri 2006, 279 (No. 447)]. Just as its original word *rāhdāri* was in the Mughal Empire, the term *rahadāri* was sometimes used in the sense of customs duty exemption certificate in the Mysore Kingdom; however, the term is not used in the text of that document.

²⁶ This author has previously discussed the relationship between Hindu monastery heads and their lay disciples, relying on textual sources other than the *nirūpas* [Ōta 2017].

at the Vishnu temples. It dictates that the head of Parakāla Monastery visiting the Vishnu temples in the kingdom should be treated with the utmost respect and honor in rituals [MAR 1938, 125–128 (No. 19)]. Many of the *nirūpas* regarding the rituals at the Vishnu temple were ultimately kept by Parakāla Monastery, and even if not explicitly stated in the text, these *nirūpas* were likely issued—at least partly—to protect and enhance the status of its heads, which inevitably became the subject of public scrutiny during their visits to the temples. The status of the heads who were also religious preceptors (*gurus*) of the kings of Mysore would greatly concern the kings and their officials.

The content of the *nirūpas* is diverse and not limited to what has been presented so far. A *nirūpa*-like document was issued by Purnayya to a county official urging him to grant conditional approval for widow martyrdom, the so-called *satī* [MAR 1938, 178–181 (No. 53, AD 1805)]. King Krishna Raja III issued a *nirūpa* to the Revenue Collector of the Tarikere County, Krishna Rao, in 1831, informing him of the dispatch of a reward for his contribution to suppressing the rebellion that was shaking the kingdom at that time and giving instructions on the punishment to be meted out to those participating in the rebellion [MAR 1925, 37–38 (No. 27)].

Closing Remarks

So far, we have discussed the format, wording, and content of the *nirūpas* (written orders) as well as their similarities and differences with other official paper documents and inscriptions of the Mysore Kingdom, and we have indicated several future research issues. In this final section, we highlight the value of the *nirūpas* and other paper documents for historical research on not only the Mysore Kingdom but also South India in general.

First, paper documents can shed light on the development of the Mysore Kingdom's administrative system. As already explained, the kingdom's governing structure was developed and expanded from the late seventeenth century under the reign of King Chikka Deva Raja. The institutionalization of administration was described in the historical works compiled later, but the reliability of their descriptions is not beyond doubt. The *nirūpas* are important contemporary records ascertaining that the government organization—especially the departments at the center—did come into existence and that the administration became systematized to the extent that communication within the government was held in writing.

Second, research on paper documents provides a new perspective and materials for the studies on inscriptions. The inscriptions of the eighteenth-century Mysore Kingdom differed from those of earlier periods in terms of language, wording, and function. For example, the texts of the copper plate inscriptions recording village endowments to monasteries and Brahmins came to be written—not always but often—in Kannada rather than

Sanskrit, in which at least the main part of the texts of most copper plate inscriptions had been written in South India for centuries. The change in the language of copper plate inscriptions is probably related to the fact that paper documents such as the *nirūpas* and *sādhana*s were basically written in Kannada. We have noted the similarity between some inscriptions and *sādhana* documents. More thorough comparison between paper documents and inscriptions will provide cues for the background and historical significance of this change in the language, wording, and functions of inscriptions in the eighteenth century.

Third, paper documents have a different value from inscriptions in terms of their content. As has been shown, the *nirūpas* contain little known information on the relationship between political power and Hindu religious institutions such as temples and monasteries. While the inscriptions evince that kings donated both movable and immovable properties to religious institutions and persons and mediated disputes over the distribution and possession of such properties, the *nirūpas* reveal that political powers also paid great attention to and actively concerned themselves with the businesses of temples and monasteries, which were not directly related to their properties, such as rituals and the tours of the monastery heads and their agents. Most conventional studies examining the nexus between political power and religious authority have been confined to a generalized discussion concerning the former's financial patronage of the latter and the latter's reciprocal granting of legitimacy to the former. The *nirūpas*, along with the rulers' letters to religious leaders, which could hardly be introduced here, provide valuable clues and materials for a more concrete and minute understanding of this relationship.

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