

# The Last King of India: Wajid Ali Shah and the Fall of Awadh



## Last King in India: Wajid Ali Shah by Rosie Llewellyn-Jones

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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Wajid Ali Shah, the last king of Awadh, was a complex and fascinating figure. He was a patron of the arts and a lover of life, but he was also a weak and indecisive ruler. His reign was marked by corruption, mismanagement, and British interference, and he was eventually deposed by the British in 1856.

Wajid Ali Shah was born in 1822 in the city of Lucknow. He was the eldest son of Amjad Ali Shah, the king of Awadh. Wajid Ali Shah was a sickly child, and he was often confined to his bed. As a result, he was not able to receive a formal education, but he was a gifted poet and musician. He also had a deep love of the arts, and he was a patron of many artists and musicians.

In 1847, Wajid Ali Shah became king of Awadh. He was a kind and generous ruler, but he was also a weak and indecisive leader. He was not able to control the corrupt and inefficient government of Awadh, and he was unable to resist the increasing interference of the British. In 1856, the British deposed Wajid Ali Shah and annexed Awadh.

Wajid Ali Shah was exiled to Calcutta, where he lived in poverty and obscurity. He died in 1887, at the age of 65. He was the last king of Awadh, and his death marked the end of an era.

## **The Kingdom of Awadh**

Awadh was a kingdom in northern India. It was founded in 1722 by Saadat Ali Khan, a general in the Mughal army. Awadh was a wealthy and prosperous kingdom, and it was known for its culture and its arts. Lucknow, the capital of Awadh, was one of the most important cultural centers in India.

Awadh was a tributary state of the Mughal Empire, but it was essentially independent. The British began to interfere in Awadh in the 18th century, and they gradually increased their control over the kingdom. In 1856, the British deposed Wajid Ali Shah and annexed Awadh.

## **The British Annexation of Awadh**

The British annexed Awadh in 1856. This was a controversial decision, and it was one of the causes of the Indian Rebellion of 1857. The British justified the annexation by saying that Wajid Ali Shah was a weak and incompetent ruler, and that Awadh was a corrupt and inefficient state. However, many Indians believed that the British were simply interested in taking over Awadh for their own economic and political gain.

The annexation of Awadh was a major turning point in Indian history. It marked the end of the Mughal Empire, and it paved the way for the British to establish their direct rule over India.

### **Wajid Ali Shah's Legacy**

Wajid Ali Shah is a controversial figure. He was a weak and indecisive ruler, but he was also a patron of the arts and a lover of life. He is remembered today for his poetry and his music, and for his love of Lucknow. However, he is also remembered for his failures as a ruler, and for his role in the fall of Awadh.

Wajid Ali Shah's legacy is a complex one. He was a flawed ruler, but he was also a talented artist and a generous patron of the arts. He is remembered today as one of the last great kings of India.



### Further Reading

- [Wajid Ali Shah on Britannica.com](#)
- [Remembering Wajid Ali Shah, the Last King of Awadh on TheHindu.com](#)
- [Wajid Ali Shah: The Last King of Awadh on Livehistoryindia.com](#)



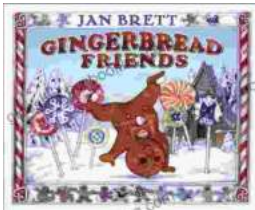
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