HISTORICAL CHAPTER 01

A Festival with Two Histories

How the full moon of Kartik became the setting for Nabadwip's extraordinary meeting of Vaishnava devotion, Shakta worship, neighbourhood art and public procession.

Nabadwip Ras is exceptional because its name comes from the Vaishnava celebration of Krishna's rasa-lila, while its most conspicuous public expression is the worship of powerful forms of the Goddess. On Kartik Purnima, neighbourhoods erect elaborate images of Kali, Bhadrakali, Mahishamardini and other deities; Vaishnava shrines continue their observances of Radha and Krishna. The city's festival is therefore not the survival of one unchanged ritual. It is the result of several historical traditions gradually sharing the same sacred night.

Its background belongs to the history of Nabadwip itself. The town was a major centre of Sanskrit scholarship, associated with Sri Chaitanya and the Gaudiya Vaishnava movement, but also with the worship of Shakti and Tantric learning. Eighteenth-century Nadia royal patronage helped give Shakta observances unusual visibility. During the nineteenth century, painted images and smaller clay figures developed into highly skilled, increasingly monumental public idols. In the modern period, the Arang procession transformed the festival into a spectacle of urban participation.

There is no universally accepted founding year. One line of local history emphasizes Maharaja Krishnachandra's encouragement during the middle decades of the eighteenth century; other accounts distinguish older household worship from later, more organized public festivities under subsequent Nadia rulers. Those versions need not describe precisely the same event: a ritual can be ancient, a patronage network newer, and a grand civic procession newer still.

This history follows the changing evidence rather than forcing every custom into a single origin story. The decisive question is how a night linked to Krishna's divine dance became Nabadwip's largest shared stage for goddess worship, sacred art and public identity.

HISTORICAL READING

Three overlapping layers: Vaishnava Rasa and Pat Purnima; royal encouragement of Shakta images; the nineteenth- and twentieth-century public Arang.

Historical references: [1, 2, 3]. Full source guide: final page.

HISTORICAL CHAPTER 02

Nabadwip before the Great Ras

A scholarly and sacred town where religious traditions were never confined to a single stream.

Long before the modern procession, Nabadwip possessed a reputation for learning. Its schools and learned households cultivated Sanskrit grammar, logic, ritual law and philosophy; their influence extended well beyond the immediate town. This scholarly culture matters to the history of Ras because many early ceremonies were maintained by households, teachers, priests and religious institutions rather than by the large neighbourhood committees familiar today.

Chaitanya (1486-1533) gave the town a defining place in the history of Bengali Vaishnavism. The public culture of devotion that formed around his memory stressed the divine names of Krishna, song, congregational worship and intense love for Radha and Krishna. It helped make Nabadwip a pilgrimage landscape. However, it did not erase the other ritual communities living in and around the town. Shakta households, worshippers of Shiva, Tantric practitioners and established Brahmanical lineages remained part of the local religious world.

Later storytellers sometimes present early Nabadwip as an absolute struggle between two religious camps. Such accounts need care. Sectarian differences and competitions for prestige certainly existed, yet ritual practice frequently crossed household and community boundaries. A person or family could respect Vaishnava festivals while making offerings to the Goddess. The coexistence visible in the later Ras therefore has historical roots in the plural religious life of Nadia.

The physical town also changed. River movement, shifting settlement patterns and the rise and decline of neighbourhood centres complicate attempts to attach one fixed route, temple or image to every period. A responsible reconstruction follows institutions, customs, oral memory and surviving written descriptions together; it does not assume that the Nabadwip of the eighteenth century had the same streets and puja sites as the contemporary city.

HISTORICAL READING

The history begins with a shared urban religious landscape, not with the sudden invention of an entire festival on a single night.

Historical references: [1, 2, 5]. Full source guide: final page.

HISTORICAL CHAPTER 03

The Vaishnava Meaning of Rasa

Why Kartik Purnima was already a spiritually important night before the rise of Shakta Ras.

In Vaishnava theology, rasa signifies a form of divine aesthetic and spiritual experience. The autumn full moon is associated with Krishna's nocturnal dance with the gopis of Vrindavan, an event interpreted not as ordinary entertainment but as the relationship of the divine with souls united by devotion. Radha stands at the centre of the devotional interpretation. Singing, recitation, image worship and depictions of the dance made the full moon a natural occasion for a public festival.

The Vaishnava Ras of Nabadwip was expressed in shrines, religious residences and devotional assemblies. Traditional images placed Radha and Krishna in an intimate setting with the accompanying gopis. Instruments, kirtan, poetry and the performance of sacred stories created a devotional atmosphere very different from the thunderous bands and enormous goddess images associated with later Arang celebrations.

Historical accounts connect the festival's deeper Vaishnava background to the culture shaped by Chaitanya and his followers. But the claim that the present-day Shakta Ras began in Chaitanya's lifetime should not be confused with evidence that its current form already existed. The older sacred date and the later public form are separate stages of the same evolving historical process.

This distinction explains the apparently unusual name. The festival continued to be called Ras because the calendar and citywide custom were anchored to the Vaishnava full moon. The subjects of the most spectacular images changed as goddess worship gained prominence. Thus the festival's name preserves a memory of its devotional setting even as its urban art reflects the strength of Shakta institutions.

HISTORICAL READING

Continuity lies in the date and sacred setting; transformation lies in which deities came to dominate public display.

Historical references: [1, 2, 3]. Full source guide: final page.

HISTORICAL CHAPTER 04

Pat Purnima and the Rotating Rasa

Painted images, narrative art and the older visual forms of the full-moon celebration.

One of the most revealing names in Nabadwip's festival history is Pat Purnima - the full moon associated with painted images or pat. Accounts describe devotional pictures depicting Radha, Krishna and scenes from the rasa-lila displayed at shrines and akharas. The medium was practical, narrative and rich in symbolism. A painted panel could make a sacred episode visible even where a permanent image or expansive shrine was absent.

Local reporting describes another visual convention: a large circular structure with Radha and Krishna in the centre and the companions arranged around them. When the wheel turned, the image gave physical expression to the circular dance. The phrase Chakra Ras or Chakrarasa is used for this devotional form. A 2022 scholarly article names a documented institution of a rotating Chakra Ras in 1910 at the Harisabha temple, linked to Shitikantha Bhattacharya. This later date concerns a particular established practice; it should not automatically be applied to every earlier circular depiction.

The historical meaning of pat goes beyond mere decoration. In both Vaishnava and Shakta settings, picture-makers translated philosophical and mythological narratives into an instantly readable language. In the course of Ras history, painting remained important even when clay images came to dominate. Large rear panels, called chalchitra or devipat in local usage, continued the practice of telling sacred stories with colour, figures and carefully arranged scenes.

The transformation from picture to sculptural tableau was therefore not a simple abandonment of one art in favour of another. Nabadwip developed a composite visual tradition: the central idol drew worship, the painted background explained a cosmic or narrative setting, and the entire structure became a work viewed by thousands.

HISTORICAL READING

Pat Purnima is a clue to the festival's earlier image culture; Chakra Ras shows the continuing Vaishnava presence.

Historical references: [1, 3]. Full source guide: final page.

HISTORICAL CHAPTER 05

Shakti and the Tantric Heritage

The pre-existing spiritual environment in which the Goddess could become the focus of the festival.

The rise of Shakta Ras cannot be explained solely by a king's decree. Nabadwip and the wider Nadia region already supported traditions of goddess worship, Tantric learning and ritual practice. Local histories connect the name of Krishnananda Agamavagisha with the shaping and systematization of Kali worship in Bengal. These traditions gave the region a deep religious vocabulary of Shakti, the divine power manifested through multiple female forms.

Goddess worship ranged from formal household rites to intensely local cults and practices associated with particular places, lineages or ritual specialists. Kali could signify fearsome destruction and the protection of devotees; Bhadrakali, Annapurna, Jagaddhatri and Mahishamardini offered other images of divine energy. Their visual diversity later became one of Nabadwip Ras's signature features. It permitted many deities to share a date without requiring that every community worship the same image.

Some narratives about the ancient Tantric past describe conflict with Chaitanya's followers, including sensational descriptions of ascetic practices. Those stories form part of the local historical tradition but are not all equally verifiable. They should be read alongside evidence of the city's devotional, scholarly and household religious life. The most secure point is that Shakta worship existed before the public celebration became widely known as Shakta Ras.

When the Kartik full moon attracted broader public gatherings, pre-existing goddess worship had a ready-made ritual repertoire: priests, icons, offerings, stories, music and patrons. The festival could expand not by inventing a new goddess theology, but by bringing these familiar acts into a more visible annual setting.

HISTORICAL READING

The Shakta tradition supplied the religious foundation; patronage and public participation later enlarged its scale.

Historical references: [1, 2, 5]. Full source guide: final page.

HISTORICAL CHAPTER 06

Maharaja Krishnachandra and the 1700s

The patron whose name stands at the centre of most explanations for the festival's transformation.

Maharaja Krishnachandra of Nadia, usually dated as ruling from 1728 to 1782, occupies a central place in Nabadwip's Ras history. A report citing local historian Shanti Ranjan Deb describes a change after roughly 1750, when the ruler was able to devote greater attention to temple patronage, religious observances and public festivities. The same report associates the mid-1750s with wider ceremonial initiatives in Nadia, including Jagaddhatri worship and Barodol.

Krishnachandra was closely identified with the Shakta tradition. The royal household's support mattered not merely as a question of religious preference, but because the court exercised influence over priests, scholars, artists, patrons and local society. Recognition by the ruler could help transform a household observance into a socially prestigious celebration. Once a puja received patronage, others could imitate it; more skilled artists could be commissioned; the scale of public display could increase.

Some writers argue that Krishnachandra chose the Ras full moon deliberately to reduce the influence of Vaishnava institutions. In the historian's account reported in the press, the particular tension concerned the worship of Chaitanya as a divine incarnation and disagreements over religious authority. Yet that does not establish the ruler's opposition to all forms of Vaishnavism. Another historical tradition states that Nadia royalty respected both Krishna and Kali while disapproving of certain Chaitanya-centred claims.

It is therefore better to describe the reign as a period when Shakta observances gained strong royal support within an already Vaishnava sacred calendar. This gives the festival a political and institutional history without reducing centuries of shared practice to a single sectarian contest.

HISTORICAL READING

Commonly proposed phase of major Shakta expansion: approximately the 1750s, not an uncontested date of first origin.

Historical references: [1, 2, 3]. Full source guide: final page.

HISTORICAL CHAPTER 07

Why the Festival Changed Character

The movement from devotional observance to a public night of many Shakti images.

The change from Vaishnava Ras to an increasingly Shakta public festival was gradual. One explanation associates it with royal encouragement at the moment when Vaishnava shrines were already using Kartik Purnima for painted and performed representations of Krishna's dance. Shakta patrons did not need to choose a new date: they could place their images and rituals before an audience already primed to gather on the full moon.

Another explanation, preserved in scholarship on Nadia's ritual history, describes Brahman scholars who travelled away from home to conduct Durga or Lakshmi pujas. Kartik Purnima offered a later auspicious opportunity to worship their chosen deities at home. In this account, the domestic pujas grew outward as relatives, neighbours and other residents began visiting them. These accounts emphasize different agents - the royal court and scholarly households - but they can describe simultaneous causes rather than mutually exclusive origins.

An expanding number of pujas changed the experience of the city. The worshipper no longer attended only a single devotional gathering; residents moved from locality to locality to see deities, listen to music and compare artistry. This movement was the social basis of the later Arang. The Goddess was represented in numerous forms, allowing neighbourhoods to distinguish their own traditions while still participating in a common festival.

The history is significant because it shows how ritual, power and art can strengthen one another. A ruler's prestige encouraged observance; local belief sustained the images; sculptors and painters made each display distinctive; repeated visiting established a civic habit. By the nineteenth century, Nabadwip's full-moon celebration had become much more than the remembrance of one episode from Krishna's life.

HISTORICAL READING

A convincing explanation needs both royal sponsorship and the slower spread of household and neighbourhood practice.

Historical references: [1, 2, 3]. Full source guide: final page.

HISTORICAL CHAPTER 08

Elenia Kali and the Early Images

Old neighbourhood traditions preserve names and dates, but the chronology remains contested.

The deity variously called Elania, Elane or Alaneya Kali is regularly described as one of Nabadwip Shakta Ras's earliest worship traditions. Some local accounts connect the worship with Tantric practitioner Bhriguram and give 1728 as the start of a Kali shrine or observance. Other reporting places the emergence of the festival's earliest clay image in a year between 1752 and 1756. These dates can reflect different stages - a cult's foundation and its later participation in Ras - but surviving summaries do not establish that reconciliation beyond doubt.

Associated narratives describe a dark form of Dakshina Kali with loose flowing hair. Oral etymology links the local name Elania to words suggesting dishevelled hair. A subsequent image, Shavashiva, is linked in one account to Shitikantha Vachaspati and said to have followed soon after. These claims are useful as evidence of how the town remembers its early cults, though the precise year and sequence should not be treated as undisputed historical facts.

From these early images grew a distinctive pattern: the deity belonged to a locality or a group with its own inherited rules, patrons and priestly connections. Local identity mattered as much as scale. A worship committee could preserve a name, iconographic detail, route or customary offering for generations even while adopting larger idols and more elaborate festival presentation.

The early goddess images show why Ras cannot be understood purely as a changing fashion in art. Beneath the imposing sculpture lies an older structure of vows, family memory, named neighbourhoods and sacred obligations. Its continuity explains why particular idols remain important even when a newer, larger or more technically dazzling tableau attracts attention elsewhere.

HISTORICAL READING

Two often-cited dates are not equivalent: 1728 is attached to an early Kali observance; 1752-56 to a later Ras-era image tradition.

Historical references: [1, 2, 6]. Full source guide: final page.

HISTORICAL CHAPTER 09

The Nineteenth-Century Turning Point

Nadia royal successors, bigger images and the emergence of increasingly public artistic competition.

Histories that emphasize Maharaja Krishnachandra are complemented by accounts of his successors, especially Raja Girishchandra in the early nineteenth century. A scholarly survey records that royal attention continued to be expressed through the judging and rewarding of images. The later tradition of bringing idols to a central public place to be viewed and admired is closely associated with this prestige economy.

An often-repeated local story concerns Hargobinda Pramanik, a Nadia royal officer in Nabadwip, who is said to have sponsored an exceptionally tall Basanti image called Hotahatika during the time of Girishchandra. It was associated with a Chaitra observance and reportedly stood roughly thirty-six to thirty-nine feet high (accounts differ). The story is important not because it proves the exact height of every Ras image, but because it illustrates how local memory explains the growth of ambition in sculptural scale.

By the middle nineteenth century, observers described gatherings at Nabadwip to view what they called Pat Puja, including figures of Durga, Kali, Jagaddhatri and Annapurna. The term pat did not necessarily mean that all the worship was still directed only towards flat paintings. Historical usage could survive while the material practice changed. Descriptions of portable clay idols confirm the coexistence of modest figures with a growing culture of display.

The relationship between royalty and neighbourhood groups was never static. Patronage might increase under one ruler and weaken under another; committees continued because devotion, local standing and audience expectations gave them their own momentum. The nineteenth century thus helped turn an event once associated with patrons and specialist households into a stronger public institution, carried forward by communities themselves.

HISTORICAL READING

Large sculpture was a gradual innovation. Older descriptions of portable figures caution against projecting today's towering idols onto the eighteenth century.

Historical references: [1, 2, 6]. Full source guide: final page.

HISTORICAL CHAPTER 10

From Family Puja to Barowari

How neighbourhood participation became the driving force of the celebration.

Many of the oldest Ras traditions are remembered through particular families, ritual specialists or occupational communities. Over time, a substantial part of the festival became organized through barowari, or collectively supported neighbourhood worship. The committee form widened responsibility for fundraising, preparation, offerings, security, music, construction and the movement of images. It also allowed a puja to outlive the fortunes of a single household.

The southern locality of Tegharipara is especially associated with multiple Shyama images - Boro, Mejo, Sejo and Chhoto Shyama. Their relative titles, rooted in remembered sequences and local relationships, give the area a layered ritual geography. Other neighbourhoods maintain traditions of Bhadrakali, Shavashiva, Ganga Mata, Mahishamardini, Ganesh Janani and many more. Some groups retain hereditary links to priests or worship customs even after organization passes to a public committee.

The growth of barowari worship broadened competition as well as cooperation. Each locality sought to uphold the dignity of its own deity, preserve its distinctive story and demonstrate artistic accomplishment. Funds went into the image, background paintings, jewellery, lights, musicians, instruments and eventually a vehicle able to carry an unusually large structure. Artisans became integral to neighbourhood prestige.

Yet the festival never became simply a competition. Its social meaning was produced by exchange: relatives returned, residents visited other neighbourhoods, traders served crowds and new generations learned the names of local deities. A long-standing puja was a landmark in the town's memory. Through such annual repetition, collective worship transformed Ras into a map of Nabadwip's social history.

HISTORICAL READING

The expansion of barowari organization shifted festival leadership from a few patrons towards many enduring neighbourhood communities.

Historical references: [1, 5]. Full source guide: final page.

HISTORICAL CHAPTER 11

A Gallery of Shakta Traditions

The many forms of the Goddess reveal the history of devotion, locality and artistic inheritance.

Shakta Ras never required that all worshippers present Kali in an identical form. The festival's artistic range includes Dakshina Kali, forms of Shyama, Bhadrakali, Mahishamardini and goddesses associated with power, protection or particular mythic episodes. These are not interchangeable images: posture, expression, companions, weapons, vehicles and the treatment of the eyes and hair can express different theological ideas and local tastes.

Among traditions identified in local scholarship are the Shyama pujas of Tegharipara and the Bhadrakali images associated with Charichara and Harisabha Para. Historical accounts also mention Shavashiva and representations of the Mother Goddess connected to ancient neighbourhood lineages. The dates attached to individual pujas frequently come from inherited memory, and apparent precision should not be mistaken for continuous documentary proof.

The goddess's image became a statement of a neighbourhood's identity. Worshippers recognized familiar iconography while artists varied the details. Ornamentation and background narrative enlarged the meaning of the image. Thus even where two committees honoured a similarly named deity, their compositions could differ in the arrangement of attendants, scenery, the goddess's bodily posture or the story being portrayed.

This diversity also helps explain the remarkable intensity of public viewing. A visitor can read the festival as an open-air archive of local devotion. Different images bear the marks of different communities and different centuries of artistic experimentation. Their value is not measured only by height or expenditure; it rests in the continued relationship between a community, its deity and its annual act of making the sacred visible.

HISTORICAL READING

The festival's surviving old pujas are historical landmarks, not merely exhibits within a single modern carnival.

Historical references: [1, 5]. Full source guide: final page.

HISTORICAL CHAPTER 12

A Meeting of Shakta, Shaiva and Vaishnava

The festival expanded beyond a single sectarian identity into a remarkably varied sacred theatre.

Although popularly known as Shakta Ras, the festival includes many subjects that cannot be classified as exclusively Shakta. A scholarly survey groups its icons into several broad streams: goddess-centred worship, Shaiva imagery, Vaishnava deities, composite divine forms and scenes drawn from Bengali narrative literature. Such categories reveal historical expansion. As public worship grew, committees found fresh stories without abandoning the basic full-moon framework.

Some composite icons intentionally bring traditions together. Krishnakali combines recognizable elements of Krishna and Kali; Harihara joins the symbols of Vishnu and Shiva; Hara-Gauri presents Shiva and Parvati in a single devotional relationship. Such images make visible a theological principle of connected divine powers. Their popularity complicates any account that reduces Ras to permanent hostility between Vaishnavas and Shaktas.

Other tableaux depict narrative moments: Sati's departure and Shiva's grief, Ganesh with his parents, Behula and Lakhindar from Manasamangal, Ramachandra building a bridge, and Krishna in scenes of pastoral or epic devotion. The presence of Manasa, Ganga Mata and forms familiar from the Mangalkavya tradition ties the festival to Bengal's regional storytelling as much as to pan-Indian scripture.

Newer subjects joined older ones, including Bharat Mata in the age of modern national feeling. This adaptability is crucial to the festival's cultural history. It is not a museum in which all images were invented at the same time. It is a living system in which established sacred forms coexist with newly imagined stories, and each generation can add to the visual language of Ras.

HISTORICAL READING

The term Shakta Ras describes the predominant public character; the festival's iconography is substantially more inclusive.

Historical references: [1, 5]. Full source guide: final page.

HISTORICAL CHAPTER 13

Clay, Painting and Monumental Craft

How inherited artisan knowledge turned ritual figures into Nabadwip's defining public artworks.

The making of a Ras image combines structure, modelling, ornament and painting. Artisans begin with an underlying framework and build forms that must remain visually convincing at unusual heights. The head, gestures, limbs, ornaments and supporting figures are designed for viewing from a distance. The resulting sculpture serves a religious purpose but also demands sophisticated practical skill: balance, proportion, transportability and the endurance of a structure carried through crowded streets.

The chalchitra or devipat behind the image preserves the older authority of painted storytelling. Accounts of the festival describe large rear panels populated by Shiva and Parvati, Vishnu, Radha and Krishna, and scenes featuring the Goddess's victories. The pictures do not simply fill an empty background. They position the main deity within a wider universe of myths, relationships and cosmic order. The persistence of this art makes the transition from Pat Purnima to clay-idol festival an evolution rather than a rupture.

Historic competition encouraged craftsmanship. In accounts of royal visits, image-makers were valued for the quality of modelling, painting and decoration. This expectation survived even after formal royal patronage declined. Neighbourhoods commissioned increasingly remarkable visual effects; artists responded with improved techniques and daring variations. The artisan community became a central custodian of the tradition, transmitting techniques between generations.

The growth in size also changed the work itself. Where earlier figures might be carried by a small group, modern towering idols require stronger supports and planning around overhead wires, narrow lanes and turning points. The history of Ras art is therefore inseparable from the history of the city's streets and transport technologies. Devotional expression and engineering developed together.

HISTORICAL READING

An authentic record of Ras should preserve artisan names, sketches, construction methods and the stories behind traditional chalchitra compositions.

Historical references: [1, 3, 5]. Full source guide: final page.

HISTORICAL CHAPTER 14

The Rise of Arang

The procession changed from a display before patrons into a moving citywide festival.

Arang is the locally distinctive procession of Ras images after the principal worship. Accounts of its earlier form describe idols brought to Poramatala, a central civic and sacred setting, where royal observers admired or assessed their modelling and decoration. Later references connect this display to awards for skilled image-makers. Whether every detail belongs to the same ruler remains debated, but the recurring pattern is clear: images moved out of their places of worship so the wider community could see them.

As the clay idols became taller and heavier, carrying them on shoulders grew difficult. Historical scholarship describes the adoption of platforms and wheels, eventually followed by specially built iron vehicles. Some conveyances incorporated turning mechanisms so that a very large image could rotate for viewers along the road. This ability to show all sides of a structure became part of the procession's visual theatre.

For much of the twentieth century, however, movement was not uniformly orderly. Images arriving from different localities could crowd into the same narrow streets and stand for hours. Drums, shehnai and local musical traditions accompanied the displays, and the spontaneous character was part of the festival's energy. Its popularity produced the very traffic and safety problems that later required cooperation among organizers and administrators.

One of the most important modern changes took place in 1994, when a planned circular procession route was introduced. A published account by a participant in the organizing effort credits the Nabadwip Central Ras Utsav Committee, municipal and police authorities, and the then additional district magistrate P. Ramesh Kumar. This intervention marked a new stage: the older custom of public viewing was retained but given a coordinated urban route.

HISTORICAL READING

Arang's history runs from hand-carried images and royal viewing to wheeled platforms, rotating vehicles and a coordinated circular route in 1994.

Historical references: [1, 4, 5]. Full source guide: final page.

HISTORICAL CHAPTER 15

Living Legacy and the Historical Record

What can be stated with confidence, what remains debated, and why this history deserves preservation.

Nabadwip Shakta Ras is best understood as a historical accumulation. The oldest layer is the Vaishnava celebration of the Kartik full moon within the religious life shaped by Chaitanya. The Shakta layer drew on pre-existing goddess and Tantric traditions. During the eighteenth century, especially in local accounts of Krishnachandra's patronage, these practices acquired stronger visibility. The nineteenth century saw increasingly public worship and ambitious sculptural display. The later Arang, professional crafts and organized neighbourhood committees made the festival a defining civic event.

The living heritage consists of more than the spectacular idols: it includes inherited worship rules, household and neighbourhood names, artisan skills, paintings, ritual music, movement through streets, local foods, and shared memories of previous processions. Protecting these elements means recording testimony from old puja committees, photographing traditional iconography, documenting idol-making methods and collecting historical notices before they disappear.

In the end, Nabadwip Ras tells a larger story of Bengal. A sacred calendar associated with Krishna became the setting for powerful goddess imagery; artistic competition flourished alongside devotion; differences between traditions were displayed in a common city festival. The most striking continuity is not a single unchanging form, but the ability of generations to maintain a distinctive identity while continually remaking it.

HISTORICAL READING

A reliable history distinguishes remembered tradition, documented observation and later interpretation - while giving full value to all three.

Historical references: [1-6]. Full source guide: final page.

SOURCE GUIDE & SCOPE

[1] Sen (2022), academic history of Ras.
[2] Anandabazar (2017), local historian interview.
[3] Anandabazar (2017), Pat Purnima and chalchitra.
[4] Anandabazar (2015), history of the circular procession route.
[5] DaakBangla, local religious and artistic traditions.
[6] Anandabazar, Elania Kali tradition.

This original historical synthesis is based on accessible scholarship and published accounts. The complete referenced book was not available for a verified chapter-by-chapter reading; the narrative should not be mistaken for a transcription or direct summary of its unseen pages.