Bishnu Prasad Rabha, a name that resonates with the spirit of revolution and artistic brilliance, stands as a symbol of unity in the culturally diverse state of Assam. Born with extraordinary talent and driven by a passion for social change, Rabha emerged as a revolutionary artiste who sought to uplift the masses through his multifaceted artistic expressions. His life traversed the realms of literature, music, dance, painting, and politics, leaving an indelible mark on the cultural landscape of Assam. In the early stages of his life, Rabha was exposed to the vibrant artistic and intellectual environment of Tezpur, his hometown. Surrounded by luminaries such as Jyoti Prasad Agrawala and Kamala Prasad Agrawala, he found inspiration and nurtured his talents. Rabha's exceptional abilities as a singer, musician, poet, actor, dancer, and painter were evident from a young age. His proficiency in classical music, coupled with his knowledge of various instruments and dance forms, showcased his artistic versatility. However, it was the winds of change brought by the historic October Revolution in Soviet Russia that deeply impacted Rabha's trajectory. As Assam became infused with the revolutionary spirit of the time, Rabha, too, embraced rebellion and joined the Indian Independence Movement. The ideals of Marxism-Leninism resonated with him, transforming him into a realist and scientific materialist. The revolutionary fervor awakened by the October Revolution led Rabha to embark on a journey that merged his artistic genius with his commitment to the emancipation of the masses. Rabha's dip in Marxism-Leninism was a watershed moment for him and for the communist movement in Assam. He delved into the study and practice of these ideologies, which broadened his understanding of social inequality and exploitation. His perspective shifted from a focus on national revival through cultural restoration to the plight of the working class. Through his revolutionary songs, Rabha proclaimed, "Not Assamese, but workers are peers," shedding light on the true cause of suffering—exploitation. The life of Bishnu Prasad Rabha took an arduous turn as India stood on the brink of independence. In 1945, he joined the Revolutionary Communist Party and went into hiding due to the government's crackdown on communist organizations. Rabha's commitment to the cause led him to travel across Assam,

actively participating in the peasant movement. It was during this period that he experienced the profound intersection of Marxism-Leninism with his artistic endeavours. Marxism-Leninism became the confluence of seas in Rabha's restless and playful artistic life, infusing it with depth and purpose. However, despite his transformative journey and profound contributions to the socio-political fabric of Assam, Rabha's true legacy is often overshadowed. The title "Kalaguru" bestowed upon him by Vice-Chancellor Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan in 1939 perpetuates a limited perception of Rabha as a detached guru of pure art. This fails to acknowledge his deep-rooted connection with the masses and his unwavering dedication to their upliftment. Rabha's art was deeply rooted in the people, and he saw himself as a conduit for their voices and expressions. Rabha's unwavering commitment to the people and his genuine respect for them set him apart from other artists and writers of his time. He refused to confine himself to an ivory tower and engage in purely abstract art. Instead, his work was a reflection of the mass base, and he distributed the honey of the people back to the people. His philosophy can be encapsulated in his words: "The people are the inexhaustible repositories of arts and crafts." Today, as we celebrate the artistic and revolutionary spirit of Bishnu Prasad Rabha, it is imperative to recognize the profound impact he had on Assam's cultural and political landscape. His life was a testament to the transformative power of art when coupled with a deep sense of social responsibility. Rabha's journey from a prodigious artist to a committed Marxist revolutionary exemplifies his belief that no artist can be truly great without embracing the philosophy of mass revolution. As we delve into Rabha's life, we unearth a treasure trove of artistic brilliance, political conviction, and unwavering dedication to the cause of social justice. His multifaceted talents and his genuine connection with the people continue to inspire generations of artists and thinkers. It is through the prism of Rabha's life that we recognize the immense potential for art to be a catalyst for change and a medium to amplify the voices of the oppressed. Bishnu Prasad Rabha's legacy transcends the boundaries of time and geography. He remains a guiding light for artists, revolutionaries, and seekers of social justice, reminding us that true

greatness lies not in isolation but in an unwavering commitment to the welfare of the masses. Let us honour his memory by embracing the transformative power of art and continuing the struggle for a more just and equitable world.