





# LĪLĀ

THE COSMIC PLAY OF  
EMPTINESS & REALITY

Guy Eugène DUBOIS is also the author of:

VIPASSANA BHAVANA

—Inzichtmeditatie—

ATTHAKAVAGGA

—De Vrede van de Boeddha—

SATTA-VISUDDHI

—De Zeven Zuiveringen—

DHAMMA

—Overdenkingen bij een Ultieme Werkelijkheid—

DHAMMAPADA

—Het Pad van Waarheid—

KHAGGAVISANA Sutta

PARAYANAVAGGA

—De Weg naar de Andere Oever—

WOORDEN VAN WIJSHEID

—De Dhammapada Zonder Exegese—

ITIVUTTAKA

—Zo is het Gezegd—

KHUDDAKAPATHA

—Korte Passages—

YATRA NAAR MAJJHIMADESA

—Een Pelgrimsreis naar het Middenland—

UDANA

—Geïnspireerde Uitspraken van de Boeddha—

SATIPATTHANA

—Het Pad naar Zelfrealisatie—

EKAYANO MAGGO

—De Directe Weg—

SOTAPATTIMAGGA  
—Het Pad van de Stroombetreder—

ANICCA  
—Sleutel tot Bevrijding—

JIJ BENT DE STROOM

DHAMMA-ZAADJES  
— Deel I & II & III & IV & V & VI—

ASTAVAKRA GITA  
—Het Lied van de Verguisde—

BEVRIJDING & ZELFREALISATIE  
—De Woorden van de Astavakra Gita—

YATHA-BHUTA  
—The True Nature of Reality—

HSIN HSIN MING  
—Het Sacrale Niets—

KANCHUKA'S  
—Versluierungen—



# LĪLĀ

THE COSMIC PLAY OF  
EMPTINESS & REALITY

**Guy Eugène DUBOIS**

*Foreword by Paul Van hooydonck*

Dhamma  
books

• *Spiritual wisdom is a gift to be shared with insight and compassion and not exploited for vulgar personal gain. When wisdom is commercialized—‘marketed’—it loses its purity and degenerates into a commodity, giving profound insights a valuation, which undermines their transformative power.* •

(Guy E. Dubois)

For this reason, this book may be freely reproduced, used, and distributed—via any medium or file format—provided the source is explicitly cited and the terms of the copyright license (CC BY-NC-SA 4.0) by Creative Commons Belgium are respected.



D/2024/Guy Eugène Dubois, Publisher  
Zomerlaan 8/101 - 2580 Beerzel, Belgium  
gdubois.dhammadbooks@gmail.com  
<https://yatha-bhuta.com>

Lay-out, Prepress & Design: GD  
Cover: Śiva Nataraja, Dancing in Universe  
Proofreading: Jan Dewitte  
Typesetting in Helvetica Neue  
Paper: Wood-free white FSC  
Printing: Brave New Books, Rotterdam, Holland  
ISBN: 9789465126081 | NUR-Code: 718



• *This is the true secret of living—completely absorbed in what you are doing in the moment. Instead of seeing it as work, think of it as play.* • <sup>1</sup>

Alan Watts



## CONTENT

CONTENT	11
FOREWORD	13
INTRODUCTION	17
LĪLĀ STANDS FOR DIRECT EXPERIENCING	21
LĪLĀ: A COSMIC PLAY	29
THE 'DIVINE' IN HET CONCEPT OF LĪLĀ	45
LĪLĀ & TANTRA	57
CHAPTER I - LĪLĀ IN HINDUISM	61
CHAPTER II - LĪLĀ IN BUDDHISM	69
CHAPTER III - LĪLĀ IN PHILOSOPHY AND SPIRITUALITY	81
CHAPTER IV - LĪLĀ IN THE CONTEMPORARY WORLD	135
CHAPTER V - PRACTISING LĪLĀ IN THE PRESENT	149
AFTERWORD	169
BIBLIOGRAPHY	173
FOOTNOTES	175



## FOREWORD

*In the ethereal space of the Shiva Sutras, Līlā unfolds like a cosmic play, a sacred dance of the Absolute that brings to life the creation, transformation and destruction of the universe in a profound way.*

*These ancient, mystical texts reveal a fundamental truth: that our existence is part of an endless cycle of change and movement, in which the Absolute expresses itself through constant evolution and transformation.*

*When we allow ourselves to be still for a moment and turn our attention inward, we come to the discovery that the world within us and around us is constantly changing. Sounds appear and disappear, thoughts pop up and disappear again, and emotions rise up to fade away again.*

*This constant process of coming and going reflects the deeper nature of existence: everything that rises will eventually disappear. This impermanence, this maleness, is a universal principle that reminds us of the incessant flow of change that pervades life.*

*We are born into this world.  
Our life unfolds here.  
We grow up, go to school, have children,  
grow old and die.  
We have moments of ups and downs.  
Of happiness and unhappiness.  
Of wealth and poverty.  
Of sickness and health.  
Of loneliness and connection.  
Of deep meaning and despair.*

*Of war and peace.  
Such is the play of things in this world.  
The play of forms that come and go.*

*The movement on the surface  
Of the vast ocean of existence.  
All these forms are temporary.  
Perishable, ephemeral, fleeting.  
They are short-lived.  
For the simple reason  
that they exist within the dimension of 'time'.  
In the East, one speaks of relative  
reality/saṃsāra/sensory world.*

*In the light of eternity,  
these temporal phenomena have only relative  
importance.  
They rise from the field of unmanifested potentiality  
to disappear back into it.  
In the East, this is called the Absolute Reality.*

*That which is always there.  
That which does not change.  
But that which is not sense-perceptible.  
In the West, many would use the word 'God'.*

*True spiritual practice focuses  
on the experience of this transcendent reality.  
Nothing in the world of transient forms  
brings us lasting satisfaction.  
A job, a house, money, a relationship, a family, success,  
prestige, reputation, power are temporary.  
Fleeting phenomena in the universal game  
of things.*

*Only that in us which does not come and go,  
that does not appear and disappear,  
that does not arise and perish  
offers us what we so long for.*

*It is what we are.  
It is our true face.  
It is our essence.*

*We are eternal.  
Timeless and boundless.  
When we realize this, the temporal,  
the play of fleeting forms loses importance.  
We see that this endless coming and going  
takes place on the surface of existence.*

*Līlā is a beautiful play.  
It is a play.  
Not so serious.  
We are the silent and eternal spectators  
of the play of forms.  
To know that is the deepest happiness.*

*Paul Van hooydonck  
Barcelona, September 2024*





## INTRODUCTION

The *Śiva Sūtras* <sup>2</sup> reveal *Līlā* as a sacred dance of the Absolute <sup>3</sup>—a cosmic play in which the universum is created, transformed and destroyed.

However, this playful energy is not limited to Shaivistic texts, but flows through many religious and philosophical traditions like an invisible thread connecting the human experience to the Primal Source: Pure Consciousness. <sup>4</sup>

In the *Bhagavad Gītā*, <sup>5</sup> *Krishna* acts as the divine teacher, whose earthly deeds are imbued with wisdom and cosmic joy. Although *Līlā* is not mentioned explicitly, his actions embody the playful force that constitutes the universe. The *Gītā* <sup>6</sup> invites us to see life as a theatre in which the Absolute unfolds in an eternal cycle of creation and transformation.

The theme of *Līlā* is also highlighted in the *Vishnu Purana* and *Bhagavata Purana*. <sup>7</sup> Here, the deeds of *Vishnu* <sup>8</sup> and *Krishna* <sup>9</sup> are seen as manifestations of the cosmic playfulness with which they protect and reform the world.

*Krishna's* youth, as described in the *Bhagavata Purana*, <sup>10</sup> reflects the essence of *Līlā*—playful acts that, while appearing innocent, hold profound cosmic significance.

Through *Krishna*, *Vishnu's* creation unfolds as a cyclical, playful expression of divine creativity, where each action resonates with joy, spontaneity, and the boundless freedom of the universe.

*Līlā* is not merely a divine force; it is the core dynamic of change and rebirth that gives rhythm to the cosmic dance.

In tantrism, *Līlā* is seen as the spontaneous expression of *Śakti*—the creative energy that flows through the universe. <sup>11</sup>

Tantric texts <sup>12</sup> describe the universe as a divine dance in which every manifestation, big or small, is part of a ceaseless process of creation, transformation and renewal. This vision invites us to think of the world as a living, dynamic space, in which nothing is static and everything mutates and transforms continuously.

Modern thinkers are also discovering the concept of *Līlā* outside the religious context. They see life as a play of possibilities, where rigid structures disappear and freedom flourishes.

As *Krishnamurti* said:

• *Being free is a state of mind—not freedom from anything, but the feeling of being free, the freedom to question everything and therefore so intense, active and powerful that it throws overboard every form of dependence, bondage, imitation and acceptance.* •

A free thinker does not simply partake in the divine play—he *is* *Līlā*. In this cosmic dance, he becomes both the dancer and the melody guiding him, both the flowing stream and the consciousness pervading all things, the silent witness of it all.

*Līlā* transcends time and space. <sup>13</sup> It invites us to embrace life in its spontaneity, free from any need for control, certainty, or specific outcomes. Life is a cosmic whirl that sweeps us along, like dancing dervishes <sup>14</sup> spinning in an ecstatic circle of surprise and transformation.

*Līlā* teaches us to ride the waves of existence, <sup>15</sup> meeting each new experience with an open heart and a play-

ful mind. In this joyful surrender, our true essence unfolds: a revelation of Pure Consciousness, free and uninhibited, in perfect harmony with the flow of life.

Divine Play reveals that joy and creativity lie at the heart of existence. Joy, as one of the seven factors of enlightenment (*sambojjhaṅga*),<sup>16</sup> is not only a fruit of awakening but also an essential prerequisite for it. Creativity, in turn, allows the boundless expression of this awakening and invites us to continuously renew the dance of existence.

*Līlā* reminds us that life is not a task to complete, but an invitation to play, discover, and always be surprised by life's spontaneous twists and turns. Not by striving, but by being.

'*Not by striving, but by being*' means that the essence of life is not found through effortful pursuit or constant striving to achieve specific goals. Instead, it suggests that true fulfillment and understanding arise through simply being present, embracing the flow of life as it is, without forcing or controlling outcomes.

Writing this book was not just a task, but a creative journey full of surprises, challenges, and profound insights. Each step along the way revealed new facets of understanding, shedding light on the larger tapestry of existence. It became an act of discovery, a process of uncovering the spontaneous beauty in each moment.

In this unfolding, I found an ode to life itself—a celebration of the ever-changing, ever-evolving dance that life invites us to join. It is a rhythm that constantly calls us to move with wonder, to embrace the mystery with an open heart, and to flow freely with the divine play that underlies all of existence.

This journey of discovery and creation has been deeply enriched by the guidance of my spiritual friend, Jan Dewitte. His meticulous editing of the Dutch edition not only elevated this book to new heights but also imbued the entire process with deeper meaning. I am profoundly grateful for his insights, thoughtful suggestions, and unwavering dedication. His presence in this project has been like a refreshing breeze, bringing clarity and inspiration to these pages. Without his contribution, this experience would not have been the same.

Guy  
Cavalaire-sur-Mer, October 2024

## LĪLĀ STANDS FOR DIRECT EXPERIENCING

The concept of direct experiencing refers to a form of immediate, unfiltered perception or experience of reality, without the intervention of mental constructions, interpretations or preconceptions. It refers to an experience in which the perceiver is fully present in the moment, without thought colouring or distorting the experience.

In spiritual and philosophical contexts, this is associated with a state of consciousness in which one transcends the usual concepts and judgments, perceiving reality *yathā-bhūta*<sup>17</sup>—in its purest, unfiltered form. This state of awareness fosters direct knowledge or insight, not derived from rational analysis, but from a profound, intuitive understanding of the nature of existence.

A few examples illustrate this.

Take a walk in nature. Instead of naming the trees or thinking about what you have to do later in the day, simply feel the wind on your skin, hear the rustling of the leaves and smell the fresh forest air. You take in the environment without the need to describe or analyse it. This is a direct experience of nature.

In meditation, direct experience plays a central role. When you focus your attention on breathing, you observe the air flowing in and out of your body, without judging or thinking. It is pure awareness of the breath, where thoughts do not dominate. Better yet: it is the empty space between two thoughts. In this way, you experience the NOW moment without mental distraction.<sup>18</sup>

On an emotional level, direct experiencing can occur when you feel intense joy, sadness or love. For example, when you look at a loved one and your heart fills with warmth, without trying to put the feeling into words or