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Explain the significance of the title of the play "Mrichchhakatika"?

Ans: Any literary work's title serves as a hinting device to help the reader get a related idea about the content. The title usually serves as the work's signpost, letting reader know what to expect from it. The more closely related the theme and title are, the more appealing the title will be. But sometimes, contrastive titles are also appealing. In its literal sense, the term "Mrichchhakatika" means "The Little Clay Car". In Sanskrit plays, a play is typically titled after the hero or heroine. However, this is also true of Shakespearean plays, particularly the tragedies. But other than "Cymbeline", none of his comedies were titled after the male or female main character. A play's title is generally derived from its main theme. The play's name, however, does not adhere to these conventional rules.

In the play "Mrichchhakatika", the title of the play is derived from the incident that occurs in the middle part of the play, i.e., in the beginning of Act VI. It may appear like an irrelevant event at first, but it is certainly the play's central incident. The first word of the title is "mrit" which refers to clay. But the plot of the play is centred on the golden ornaments. Charudutta's young son Rohasena is depicted pulling a clay cart in a short scene in which Rohasena is shown longing for a golden cart, which serves as a device to move forward the plot. Although, the significance of the clay cart cannot be negated. Rohasena is upset in Act VI because he used to play with a golden toy cart earlier, which he now desires because now he has to play with an earthen toy cart. Radhanika then offers clarification regarding the issue: "He used to play with a gold cart that belongs to the son of, a neighbour. But that was taken away, and when he asked for it, I made him this little clay car. But when I gave it to him, he said 'I don't like his little clay cart, Radanika. Give me my gold cart.'"

So, Vasantasena fills the cart to the brim by giving him her jewellery. This incident is where the title comes from. Here, it is important to notice that the ornaments are the same ones, that: Charudutta received in Act I to retain: for safekeeping. In Act II, Sharvilaka stole those jewels. He gives the same jewellery back to Vasantasena in Act IV. The ornaments make Vasantasena and Charudutta's union possible. It also helps to illuminate the heroic nature of the play's protagonists. Ornaments appear to be blessed for the protagonists in the play's first half. However, in the play's second half, Charudutta suffers and is condemned to death due to these jewels. Thus, as the play progresses, the ornaments serve as an ironic device that depicts both the fortunate and unfortunate aspects of human life. In the play, an earthen toy cart connects these opposing states.

The confusion of the carts also leads to the play's final complexity. Thus, there is a hint of the mixing of the carts in the title. It can be said that "Little Clay Cart" was a prelude to the actual carts. Additionally, Vasantasena had to suffer at Sanathanaka's hands because she had missed the cart intended for her, and Rohasena was grieving because he was missing his golden cart. However, Ujjayani's troubles under a

cruel ruler might not have ended if Aryaka had not been on Vardhamanaka's cart. The clay cart resonates even though the carts are “real” carts.

The title could have a further religious or philosophical bent. It is possible that the title alludes to people's own existential identity crises. Therefore, one may say that the play's title is suitable because it refers to several of the play's themes in a subtle way. Along with being brief, it also has a musical charm.