

## Abstract No 44

# Vidushaka in Rathnāvalī, Abhijñānashākuntala and Mṛcchakaṭikā: With Reference to Superiority and Incongruity Theories of Humour

Lokeshwari S. Karunarathna

Senior Lecturer, Department of Sinhala, University of Ruhuna

Vidushaka (vidūṣka) is the trustworthy close Brahmin friend of the hero in every Sanskrit drama though he is been named differently, for instance Vasanthaka (vasanthaka) in rathnāvalī, Madhavya (māḍhavya) in Abhijñānashākuntala and Maithreya in mṛcchakaṭikā. Since Sanskrit dramas discuss about serious themes such as humanity, human bonds, destiny and character variations hence Vidūṣaka is the comedian who blends humor and laughter to the play. Humor has been defined and theorized by both Eastern and Western theorists. The main objective of this study is to examine the humor produced by Vidūṣaka with reference to two of the Western theories of Humor: Superiority theory and Incongruity theory. For this purpose the research problem was stated as how could the humor, which was brought out through Vidushakas in rathnāvalī, Abhijñānashākuntala and mṛcchakaṭikā be analyzed with relation to the superiority and incongruity theories of humor? Superiority related humor attends on disparagement of another person's mistakes or stupidity. As the listeners or the audience feel some kind of supremacy over the failures and discomforts of others, this could also be considered as an aggressive form of humor. The human mind consists of basic mental patterns, which are established with life experiences. In the incongruity theory, the humor emerged by ideas clashes with the existing patterns and expectations in the listener's mind. In order to realize the humor, the audience must be able to cognitively understand the incongruity. First, the three dramas were examined carefully in order to gather the incidents, where Vidūṣaka is producing humor. Those incidents were categorized with reference to the two theories. Data was mainly analyzed qualitatively. Numerically, it was clearly visible that the humor created by Vidūṣakas in the above three dramas falls within the superiority theory more than the incongruity theory.

**Keywords:** *Abhijñānashākuntala, Incongruity theory, Rathnāvalī, Superiority Theory, Vidūṣaka*