

# Umpasa as Character Building in Simalungun Community

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## ABSTRACT

This paper is entitled " *Umpasa* as Character Building in the Simalungun Community". *Umpasa* as a cultural tradition and oral tradition owned by the community serves as a medium for conveying hope, and advice on moral teachings that can be guided by the Simalungun community, Simalungun *Umpasa* is often played in traditional ceremonial activities such as at wedding ceremonies, funeral and others. etc. This study aims to describe the character values contained in Simalungun *Umpasa*. The theory used in this paper refers to Suyanto (2011) about the values of character building by using qualitative descriptive analysis methods. The results showed that Simalungun *Umpasa* found values that can be used as character building, namely: religious values, honesty, tolerance, discipline, hard work, creative, independent, curiosity, love for the homeland, love of peace, love to read, care environment, gender management, love of culture, perseverance and frugality.

**Keywords:** *Umpasa*, Character Building, Simalungun Community

## INTRODUCTION

Each ethnicity has a different source in building the character. The Simalungun *ethnic umpasa* (pantun) can be used as an important source for the young generation or the nation's next generation as a source of character building, where the contents of the *Umpasa* teach a lot about how to think, behave, interact, cooperate in the family, community and nation as a reflection of the nation's culture. *Umpasa* its use is often

found during the implementation of traditional ceremonies such as weddings, entering a new house, funerals, and other traditional ceremonies.

*Umpasa* contains a philosophy of life, ethics, politeness, laws, and society which are packaged in language aesthetics (Panggabean, 2007: 57). The meaning of *Umpasa* generally contains prayers and good wishes, and also in the form of advice that can be applied in the world of education and society. In general, *Umpasa* plays an important role to maintain the function of words and the mindset, as a means of maintaining the language. Almost all of the archipelago has an oral tradition of rhymes, but the only difference is the terms (names only) for example: in Javanese, it is known as *parikan*, Sundanese called it as *paparikan*, Tobanese called it as *Umpasa*, Karo language called it as *ndungdungen*, and Simalungun called it as *Umpasa*.

As explained above *Umpasa* can be used as a source of building the character. Further results according to Suyanto (2011) that universally there are at least nine character values that can be developed, namely:

1. Love God and all His creation
2. Independence and responsibility
3. Honest/trustworthy
4. Respect and courtesy
5. Generous, like to help and work together
6. Confident and hardworking
7. Leadership and justice
8. Kind, humble, and
9. Tolerance, peace, and unity.

Lately, character building has been widely discussed in various forums. Especially those that are directly related to the younger generation or the next generation of the nation. The facts show that among the younger generation the attitudes and morals they have can be said to have decreased. Therefore, it is necessary to instill character education in society such as in acting, being polite, and having integrity as a reflection of culture. These character values can be taught through Simalungun *Umpasa*.

### **Understanding *Umpasa***

*Umpasa* is a Batak poem that generally consists of four lines consisting of sampiran (first couplet), content (second couplet), and rhymes ab-ab or aa-aa. *Umpasa* is a form of expression of thoughts and feelings that are always present in various events of people's lives, including happy and sad events.

Simbolon, Apul., et al (1986) said that *Umpasa* is a Tobanese poem consisting of two, three, four or more lines that can be compared with Karmina, ordinary pantun, and talibun in old Indonesian literature.

### **Definition of Character Education**

Etymologically the word 'character' comes from Latin which means nature, mentality, and personality. Character is a description of behavior in a person's daily habits both good or bad. In this case the environment greatly affects the formation of one's character education. Puskur (2010) character is a way of thinking, behaving and acting which is obtained from the character of a person's personality as a result of various virtues. Character is the total values, thoughts, words, and behaviors or actions that make up a person (Sibarani, 2012: 138). From some of the opinions above, it can be concluded that character is a trait that can distinguish a person from others which is usually obtained from the family environment since childhood and aims to shape one's personality for the better. Character education is an educational process that thoroughly connects the moral

dimension with the social environment in the lives of students as the basis for the formation of an independent and quality generation that can be accounted for in accordance with the principle of truth (Raharjo, 2010). Ramli (2003) character education has the same essence and meaning as moral education.

### **Theory Used**

The theory used in this study is a theory that refers to the Ministry of National Education (Suyanto, 2011) which formulates eighteen (18 values) character values, as follows: (1) religious, (2) honest, (3) tolerance, (4) discipline, (5) hard work, (6) creative, (7) independent, (8) democratic, (9) curiosity, (10) national spirit, (11) patriotism, (12) respect achievement, (13) friendly / communicative, (14) peace-loving, (15) likes to read, (16) cares about the environment, (17) cares about social, (18) responsibility.

### **RESEARCH METHODS**

The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative method. The purpose of qualitative research is to describe and analyze phenomena, events, social activities, attitudes, beliefs, perceptions, thoughts of people individually and in groups (Moleong, 2007: 7).

### **DISCUSSION**

Based on the results of the study, it was found that several *Umpas* Simalungun can be used as character building in the Simalungun community. Among others:

#### **1. Religious**

The value of the religious character teaches to obey the teachings of the religion they adhere to and have a sense of tolerance and harmony with followers of other religions. The following is an example of Simalungun *Umpasa* which instills religious character values.

*Marasar ma anduhur*

*Marasar i over this durian*

*Ulang hita mardua uhur*

*Manambah laho praise God*

Translation:

Nest the turtledove

Nesting on the durian tree

Don't be double hearted

To praise God

The contents of *Umpasa* above is "*Ulang hita mardua uhur, Manambah laho mamuji God*" teaches us to be serious in worshiping God. The Simalungun community believes that God is the one who gives everything that is owned by humans, because of the power and goodness that is one of the reasons the Simalungun community instills the value of religious character.

## 2. Honest

The value of honest character teaches that a person becomes an individual who can be trusted in his words and actions. The following is an example of Simalungun *Umpasa* which teaches the value of honest character.

*I lompah bangun-bangun*

*I baen attupni pakon lada*

*Anggo falfasafah ni Simlungun*

*Aima Habonaron do Bona*

Translation:

Boiled the *bangun-bangun* leaves

Seasoned with pepper

Simalungun people's philosophy

Truth is the root of everything

The content of the *Umpasa* above is "*Anggo falsafah ni Simalungun, Aima Habonaron do Bona*" is the philosophy of the Simalungun tribe which is based on the truth, both in attitude and in the right view. Thus, it is very clear that the Simalungun community attaches great importance to honesty in life.

## 3. Tolerance

The value of the character of tolerance teaches a person to respect all differences, both religion, ethnicity, to attitudes and behavior. The following is an example of Simalungun *Umpasa* which has a tolerance value.

*Marhudung do pahu*

*Lapudung becomes palia*

*Ai ho do ahu*

*Sada do hita i bagas sanina*

Translation:

Pahu a kind of fern

Petai fruit becomes petai

I am you

We are united in brother

The content of the *Umpasa* above is "*ai ho do ahu, sada do hita i bagas sanina*" not only shows the unity between brothers, but also tolerance and mutual understanding/respect for the diversity of all people in society. From the contents of this *Umpasa*, it is clear that the Simalungun tribe upholds the attitude of peace so that there will be no division of one another.

## 4. Discipline

The value of disciplined character teaches a person to be obedient and orderly to the rules that apply in the environment where he is. The following is an example of Simalungun *Umpasa* which contains the value of a disciplined character.

*Marumbak ma hayu guava*

*Nabolah please maropuk stone*

*Domma Nasiam Saud Marjabu*

*Sombah martondong, elek marboru*

Translation:

Break the guava wood

Split the wood please and the stone is crushed

You guys are married

Respect to the tondong, and to the boru

The content of *Umpasa* above shows that self-discipline does not only apply to work, home, or school, but also within the scope of customs. "*Tondong*" is a customary status that is considered high in the Simalungun community, making the *tondong party* get special rules to be respected, while "*boru*" is a party who works in a traditional party and gets the privilege to be persuaded, so that the traditional party can run. This is one of the rules or other philosophies of the Simalungun community that must be obeyed.

## 5. Hard work

The character value of hard work teaches us to be serious about overcoming various obstacles in life as well as possible. The following is an example of the Simalungun *Umpasa* which contains the character value of hard work:

*I robah ma hayu samoja*  
*I'm going to be a baroti*  
*Anggo na gogoh marhorja*  
*Ai do na dapotan rajoki*

Translation:

Chopped down samoja wood  
Made into a pillar  
People who work hard

He is the one who gets sustenance

The contents of *the Umpasa above is "Anggo na gogoh marhorja, ai do na dapotan rajoki"*. Persistence in work is an example of hard work behavior that does not give up if there are obstacles faced. This *Umpasa* advises one to work hard, not only to earn sustenance but also to achieve goals or ideals.

## 6. Creative

The value of creative character teaches us to do something from what we have to produce new innovations. The following is an example of Simalungun *Umpasa* which contains creative character values.

*Anggo ikan haporas*  
*Lopak do gan uluni*  
*Anggo bois ma gan boras*  
*Lompah ham malah suyuni*

Translation:

haporas fish

The head is white

If you run out of rice

Groats can also be cooked

The contents of *the Umpasa above is "Anggo bois ma gan boras, lompah ham malah suyuni"*, advised the Simalungun community to have innovations or create things that did not exist. The innovation in question does not have to be something big but in a small scope such as utilizing simple items to be made more useful.

## 7. Independent

The value of independent character teaches that a person is not easily dependent on others in completing his work. The following is an example of Simalungun *Umpasa* which contains independent character values.

*Padar ma gambiri*  
*Mardepek-depek*  
*Sarihon ban yourself*  
*Ulang tedek-tedek*

Translation:

Burn the candle

Her voice is crackling

Look for yourself

Don't beg

The content of the *Umpasa above is "Sarihon Bani Diri, Ulang Tedek-Tedek"* teaches the Simalungun community to be independent and not to bother others, especially parents. If they are of working productive age, or graduated from school, it is hoped that the Simalungun community will immediately find work and learn to live independently. This is because not always someone can rely on others.

## 8. Curiosity

The value of the character of curiosity teaches a person to seek to know deeply what he has learned or experienced. The following is an example of the value of the character of curiosity in Simalungun *Umpasa*.

*Marhata Gual Sabangun*  
*Manortor ma i tongah alaman*  
*Halak na maila manukkun*  
*rado dalan-dalan*

Translation:

Sound the drum of sabangun

Dancing in the middle of the page

Shy people ask

Finally become a walk

The content of *the Umpasa above is "Halak na maila manukkun, Dob ni rado dalan-dalan"* teaches someone not to be afraid to act in finding out information from things they want to know. The higher the curiosity, the more knowledge gained so that it can develop or progress.

### 9. Love the Motherland

The value of the character of love for the homeland teaches a person to have loyalty, high concern for the nation and the homeland. The following is an example of Simalungun *Umpasa* which contains the character values of love for the homeland:

*Itutung ma toppoh toppoh*

*Itutung i tongah ni juma*

*Ulang palar diri bani gogah*

*Anggo laho padearhon negaratta*

Translation:

Burn the trash

Burned in the middle of the field

Don't think about energy

To build our country

The contents of the *Umpasa* above is "Ulang palar diri bani gogah, anggo laho padearhon negaratta" which instills the value of the character of love for the homeland. The Simalungun community hopes that everyone who works is not only useful for himself, but for the country as well. The Simalungun community understands that as citizens, the Simalungun community is also responsible for advancing the Indonesian state.

### 10. Peace-loving

The value of peace-loving character teaches a person to make others happy and comfortable with his presence. Examples of Simalungun *Umpasa* that contain peace-loving character values are:

*Sangkir do panginum*

*Piring do na gabe snacks*

*Ulang hita marsidalian*

*Ase ulang tambah parsalisihan*

Translation:

Drink cup

Food plate

Let's not argue with each other

So as not to increase the dispute

The contents of the *Umpasa* above is "Ulang hita marsidalian, Ase ulang tambah parsalisihan" teaches to avoid disputes. If it is wrong, then it must admit the mistake, so that there is no hatred in others. Avoiding disputes is also one of the efforts to achieve peace.

### 11. Fondness for reading

The value of the character of fondness to read teaches a person to take time to read various readings that are useful for instilling goodness in oneself. The following is an example of *Umpasa* that contains the character value of fondness for reading:

*Boras na iduda*

*Iayak ase ulang mangihut toppoh*

*Halak na ringgas mambasa*

*Buei do add pambotoh*

Translation:

Pounded rice

Winnowed so as not to join the bran/antah

People who read a lot

Gained a lot of knowledge

The content of the *Umpasa* above is "Halak na ringgas mambasa, Buei do tambah pambotoh", teaches Simalungun community to be diligent in reading so that they gain knowledge that is useful for themselves and useful for the community.

### 12. Environmental care

The character value of caring for the environment teaches us to prevent environmental damage and repair the damaged environment. The following is an example of Simalungun *Umpasa* which contains the character values of caring for the environment:

*Margalah I halaman*

*Pas rondang ni bulan*

*Ulang I buang toppoh sembarangan*

*Ase ulang gabe sihataon*

Translation:

Play hide and seek in the yard

Just when the full moon

Don't litter

So don't be the talk of people

The contents of the *Umpasa* above is "Ulang I buang toppoh sembarangan, Ase ulang gabe sihataon" teaches a person not to damage the environment. Throwing garbage carelessly makes the environment dirty. The Simalungun community is famous for its environmental cleanliness, so if there are people who litter, then that person is considered a dirty person, in the sense of not maintaining personal hygiene.

### 13. Social care

The value of social care character teaches the Simalungun community to always assist others in need. The following is an example of an *Umpasa* that contains the value of a social care character:

*Mardalan hu huta parsibuntuan*

*Laho hu paridian*

*Anggo dong na marsitaronon*

*Rade ma hita marsiurupan*

Translation:

Walk to Sibuntuon village

Going to the bathhouse

If anyone is grieving

Let's help each other

The content of the *Umpasa* above is "Anggo dong na marsitaronon, Rade ma hita marsiurupan" which teaches that every member of the Simalungun community helps each other when someone experiences grief such as assisting the funeral process, or natural disasters by working together to clean up landslides or whatever it is we are obliged to help people who are in trouble.

Apart from the character values formulated by the Minister of National Education, from the results of the research conducted, Simalungun *Umpasa* also educates other positive character values, including:

### 1. Agreement

The agreement character values to teach the Simalungun community to agree in all good things. The following is an example of Simalungun *Umpasa* which contains uniform character values:

*Galugur do*

*Mamigar Sibahut*

*Dos ni uhur do*

*Horja ase saut*

Translation:

Sour gelugurlah

Souring catfish

Be mindful

Doing work to make it happen

The content of *Umpasa* above is "Dos ni uhur do, Horja ase saut" teaches to be of one heart and one mind, or in other words to be of the same mind. This *Umpasa* teaches

that when two or more people agree to do something positive, every job can be done.

### 2. Gotong Royong Spirit

The value of the gotong royong spirit teaches each other to help each other in various social activities. The following is an *Umpasa* Simalungun that educates the value of the character of gotong royong:

*Sapah parpanganan*

*Galas ma panginuman*

*I huta Parnalihan*

*Sada panriaahan do malasni parturan*

Translation:

Wooden plate for dining

Drinking glasses

In Parnalihan Village

As long as it makes the heart happy

Even though the *Umpasa* above is contains the same word, but basically this *Umpasa* educates the value of the character of gotong royong. This is because the *Umpasa* is said to be at the time of annual work (service work carried out once a year). This *Umpasa* teaches that when doing gotong royong, the burden will feel lighter, the work will be completed quickly, and it will strengthen the ties of brotherhood, all of which can make the heart happy.

### 3. Gender Management

The character values of gender management educate people in the division of roles and between the tasks of men and women in certain community groups in accordance with the norms, customs or habits of the community. The following is an example of Simalungun *Umpasa* which educates the character values of gender management:

*Itutung ma gambiri*

*Mardeser mardosor*

*Nasiam mataniari*

*Tubuhan boru jadi Master, tubuhan anak jadi Doktor*

Translation:

Burn the candle

Crackling sound

Can you be descendants?

When a woman is born, she becomes a master, and a man becomes a doctor.

The contents of *the Umpasa* above is, "*Jumpahan Nasiam Mataniari, Tubuhan boru jadi Master, tubuhan anak jadi Doktor*" teaches about the differences between women and men. The Simalungun community adheres to a patrilinear system that makes the position of men higher than women. However, *the Umpasa* above shows that the position of women in the Simalungun community is also high. so even though there is gender management, the Simalungun community makes equality that is considered appropriate.

#### 4. Education

The value of educational character educates in order to foster and develop one's personality both spiritually and physically. The following is a Simalungun *Umpasa* that educates the value of educational character:

*Tubuh ma bona ni sanggar  
I lambung ni rumah bolon*

*Nunut hita marlajar  
Ase juppah habotohon*

Translation:

Grow a tree to ping-ping

Near Bolon's house

Let's study hard

So that we can gain knowledge

The content of *the Umpasa* above is, "*Nuthita marlajar, Ase juppah habotohon*" is useful for shaping children's character so that they are active in learning and achieving the highest education and can develop/improve skills that are useful for themselves and others.

#### 5. Be grateful

The value of grateful character educates to be grateful for the response to receiving a gift that provides benefits or an event that gives peace from God. The following is an *Umpasa* that contains the value of a grateful character:

*Marhatta ma gan pitpit*

*Sogop I bona galugur*

*Porini pe parsarian na otik*

*Maningon do ibagas malas ni uhur*

Translation:

Make the sound of sparrows

Perched on the tree of Galugur  
Even if the results are a little bit  
Must be happy

The content of *the Umpasa* above is, "*Porini pe parsarian na otik, Maningon do ibagas malas ni uhur*" educates people so that people remain grateful for the sustenance given by God, even though the sustenance is small. Not only that, being grateful can also give you peace and quiet in your life to make it more stable.

#### 6. Spirit of nationality

The character values of the national spirit educate to think and act to put the interests of the nation and state above the interests of oneself or one's group. The following is an example of Simalungun *Umpasa* which educates the character values of the national spirit.

*Marasar ma borong-borong  
Asar ni ibonani nakka*

*Ringgas ma hita margotong royong*

*Ase Taridah Sada uhur padearhon  
Negaratta*

Translation:

Nest the beetles

Nesting in the jackfruit tree

Be diligent / be active, let's work together

So that it looks like our unity is building the country

The content of *the Umpasa* above is, "*Ringgas ma hita margotong-royong, Ase taridah sada ni uhur padearhon Negaratta*" educates the Simalungun community to have a national spirit. The word gotong-royong means not just working together to clean up the environment, but also inviting people to take part in mutual cooperation to build Indonesia to be more advanced, in the sense of contributing energy to make Indonesia a better place.

#### 7. Love Culture

The value of the character of love of culture educates to like and love with a deep desire to prioritize culture. The following is an example of Simalungun *Umpasa* which educates the value of the character of love of culture:

*Hey mardakkah  
Marrating marbulung na tabun  
Huja pe ham manlakkah  
Ulang lupa adatni Simalungun*

Translation:

Branched wood  
Twisted and leafy  
Wherever you go  
Don't forget the Simalungun custom  
The contents of *the Umpasa above is*, "*Huja pe ham manlakkah, Ulang lupa adatni Simalungun*" remind the Simalungun people who go abroad so as not to forget the Simalungun culture. Although overseas, you may have to follow the rules or customs that apply in that place, but don't forget the Simalungun customs and culture, so that Simalungun's customs and culture will still exist and be maintained.

### 8. Hard work

The value of the character of hard work to be serious and not easily give up in completing an activity to achieve the best goal. The following is an example of Simalungun *Umpasa* which contains the character value of hard work:

*Anggo galot sidongari  
Marodor-odor do pardalanni  
Anggo ringgas mansari  
Sonang do hadopanni*

Translation:

If it's a weasel  
The road is side by side  
If you are diligent / work hard  
Finally can live happily  
The contents of *the Umpasa above is*, "*Anggo ringgas mansari, Sonang do hadopanni*" educate to be diligent in earning a living or sustenance. *Umpasa above is* the result of thinking that actively seeking sustenance will certainly get sustenance that is used to meet needs. Not only that, working hard can also increase your potential so that you are prosperous for yourself and in the social sphere.

### 9. Conflict Resolution

The character value of conflict resolution teaches us to have ideas, ways, and

behaviors to resolve any disputes or differences that can cause problems as well as possible. The following is an example of Simalungun *Umpasa* which educates the character values of conflict resolution:

*Halak na bahat  
Buei jolma mardomdom  
In na salah  
In ma hona uhum*

Translation:

People who are a lot of behavior / arrogant  
Many people hate  
Who is wrong  
He's the one who gets punished  
The content of *the Umpasa above is*, "*In na wrong, In ma hona uhum*" teaches that every action will have a consequence. Good deeds will get good karma and bad deeds will get bad karma. *Umpasa* is one way for someone to maintain his attitude and virtuous character so that he can become a role model for the family and in the social environment.

### 10. Perseverance

The value of the character of perseverance educates so that a person has a strong will and sincerity to try as much as possible to work and learn in order to give the best results for himself and be an example for others. The following is an example of Simalungun *Umpasa* which educates the value of the character of perseverance:

*Sihala ipangan buyut  
Bulung arirang sirigaton  
Marhorja pe ningon nunut  
Ase ulang hurang sipanganon*

Translation:

The squirrel eats the squirrel  
The betel nut is torn  
Work must be diligent  
So that there is no shortage of food  
The content of *the Umpasa above is*, "*Marhorja peningon nunut, Ase ulang hurang sipanganon*" teaches that one must be diligent in work. Whatever the difficulty in the work, the person must continue to work on the job until it is finished, with perseverance it can also achieve the desired goals.



## 11. Economical

The value of frugal character educates a person to be careful and thorough in managing and spending money with the aim of preparing for the future. The following is an example of Simalungun *Umpasa* which educates the value of frugal character:

*Bahat masam-masam ni goya*

*Bani juma tapian*

*Ulang ma ham marpoya-poya*

*Ulang parsuma passarian*

Translation:

Many types of worms

In the bathing field

Don't waste time

So that hard work is not wasted

The contents of *the Umpasa above is*, "*Ulang ma ham marpoya-poya, Ulang parsuma passarian*" educate people to save money for the future. If you get more sustenance, you should save it, not to buy things or do things you don't need, because this will only make the sustenance you get go to waste. The Simalungun community teaches them to save money for the future, because if something unexpected happens, the money can be used.

## CONCLUSION

Simalungun *Umpasa* is a literary work of the Simalungun community that can be used as a means to build character education for the Simalungun community. *Umpasa* has character values as formulated by the Minister of National Education, namely religious, honest, tolerance, creative, independent, democratic, curiosity, national spirit, love for the homeland, respect for achievement, friendly/ communicative, love peace, love to read, care for the environment, care about social, and responsibility. Apart from these character values, Simalungun *Umpasa* also contains other character values, namely consensus, gotong royong spirit, gender management, education, gratitude, national spirit, love of culture, hard work, conflict resolution, perseverance, and economical.

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