

# Stupa Proposal

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Prepared For: The Buddhist Society of Kennebec County

## Overview

This stupa has evolved throughout history as a product of geographic, religious and cultural differences. Here in the United States our architectural history is adolescent at best when compared to the rich and storied histories of India, China, Korea and Japan, histories spanning a couple millenia.

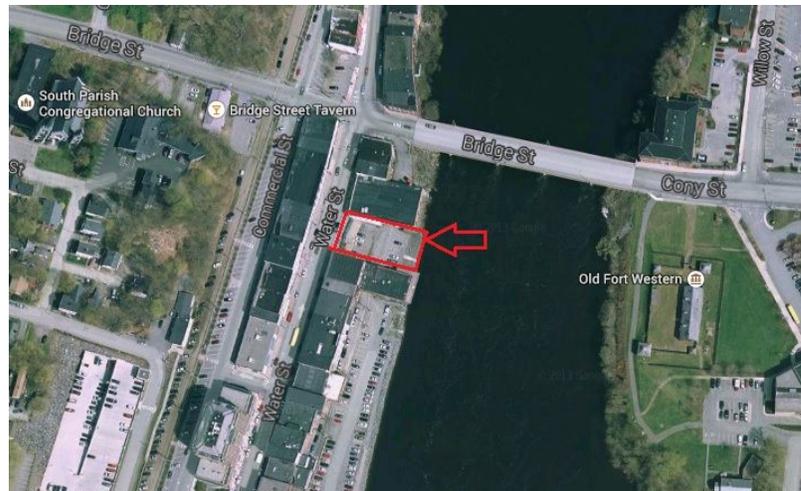
The opportunity to construct a stupa for The Buddhist Society of Kennebec County presents a unique opportunity to bring a place for meditation to Central Maine. The site occurs in a busy city center so it is of utmost importance that it remain true to tradition by remaining symbolic or votive in meaning.

## Site

The roughly 83'x125' parcel located at 189 Main St. in Augusta, Maine (also known as the "Segal Lot") connects two different ground planes. The first of which is the Main st. which sees the highest percentage of foot traffic. Dropping down 15' to the lower ground plane by way of a retaining wall, the site abuts the Kennebec river but requires maintaining a right of way to the all the river-adjacent buildings.

Another major design factor is the FEMA floodplain which will require the design to sit off the lower ground plane approximately 10'.

Strong lines-of-sight are established at Bridge St. (East of site) and Main St. (West of site) which will require careful consideration for siting the Stupa. Directly abutting the site to the North is a two story office building and directly abutting to the South is a three story office building.



## Stupa Design

There are eight primary Tibetan stupas, each referring to a major moment in the Buddha's life. The stupa's are: Lotus Blossom, Enlightenment, Stupa of Many Doors, Stupa of Descent from the God Realm, Stupa of Great Miracles, Stupa of Reconciliation, Stupa of Complete Victory, and the Stupa of Nirvana. For this project I chose to erect the Stupa of Enlightenment (also known as The Stupa of the Conquest of Mara) because it symbolizes the Buddha's victory over the temptations of Mara. Being tempted by things that challenge your resolve or commitments to the ones you love is something that transcends all religions.

## Design Overview

The Water Street entrance is at the high point of the site, with the stupa sitting on a sunken plateau. The plateau has unobstructed views to the river and street noise is reduced as a result. Visitors are welcome to explore the site with circulation paths clearly previewed from the upper street level. The entrance also encourages circumambulation by placing visitors on a path surrounding the stupa. All paths lead outward on the cardinal coordinate system to either a terrace, the riverfront or visitor's center.

## Stupa Construction

The construction of the stupa utilizes modern materials. The base where the relics are to be stored is formed concrete with a concrete top, ensuring security and waterproofing. The skeleton is formed from tube steel with welded  $\frac{3}{4}$ " bar working to brace the cast shell of the stupa.

## Precedent

The concentric enclosure is reminiscent of the Chai Watthanaram Temple from the 1630's and Wat Phra Ram from the 1430's. The stupa site is on the same axis as the Old Fort Western site directly across the river which is attempting to connect important monuments of the area, connecting the old with the new. The stupa massing is based on the Great Stupa of Dharmakaya.