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# Koans: Food for Thought Intuition

Read the following Zen *koans* two or three times. Choose one and answer or explain it.

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A monk told Joshu: "I have just entered the monastery. Please teach me."  
Joshu asked: "Have you eaten your rice porridge?"  
The monk replied: "I have eaten."  
Joshu said: "Then you had better wash your bowl."  
At that moment the monk was enlightened.

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A monk asked Tozan when he was weighing some flax: "What is Buddha?"  
Tozan said: "This flax weighs three pounds."

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Shogen asked: "Why does the enlightened man not stand on his feet and explain himself?" And he also said: "It is not necessary for speech to come from the tongue."

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Goso said: "When a buffalo goes out of his enclosure to the edge of the abyss, his horns and his head and his hoofs all pass through, but why can't the tail also pass?"

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Basho said to his disciple: "When you have a staff, I will give it to you. If you have no staff, I will take it away from you."

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Sekiso asked: "How can you proceed on from the top of a hundred-foot pole?" Another Zen teacher said: "One who sits on the top of a hundred-foot pole has attained a certain height but still is not handling Zen freely. He should proceed on from there and appear with his whole body in the ten parts of the world."

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Two monks were arguing about a flag. One said: "The flag is moving."  
The other said: "The wind is moving."  
The sixth patriarch happened to be passing by. He told them: "Not the wind, not the flag; mind is moving."

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A monk asked Fuketsu: "Without speaking, without silence, how can you express the truth?"  
Fuketsu observed: "I always remember springtime in southern China. The birds sing among innumerable kinds of fragrant flowers."

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(These *koans* are from *The Gateless Gate*, by Ekai, called Mu-mon, translated by Nyogen Senzaki and Paul Reps [Los Angeles: J. Murray, 1934]).