A staple expression in the Kansai-ben lexicon is “せやなぁ,” the equivalent of “そうだね” in standard Japanese, meaning “that’s right,” or “that’s so.” It is used to express general consensus or agreement, which is very important in Japanese conversation. You will hear this everywhere you go – from both men and women, and young and old people alike. At first it might seem strange to hear a cute little 5 foot Japanese teenage girl, or perhaps a 70-something-year-old お祖母さん saying, “せやなぁ.” In Tokyo, this would certainly draw disapproving looks. Like most people studying Japanese, you probably learned in class that the sentence final particle “なぁ” is considered to be somewhat masculine, and that girls and women should use the softer sounding “ね” instead. This will be discussed further in Chapter 14, but for now let us turn our attention to a few examples:

1) ツネミ： 今日の試験、難しかったなぁ！
   キョヘイ： せやなぁ。あんまできへんかった。
   Tsunemi: Today’s test was hard!
   Kyohei: Yeah it was. I didn’t do too well on it.

2) ツネミ： 学校の食堂、まずいなぁ。
   トミエ： せやなぁ。
   Tsunemi: The food on campus is disgusting.
   Tomie: That’s for sure…

It is also quite common to hear “せや” by itself without the accompanying “なぁ.” This can also be used to express agreement; however it is also sometimes used when you remember or realize something:

ツネミ： もうトミエに電話したん？
   キョヘイ： え、なんで？

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1 It is also very common in Kansai-ben to hear the contracted form 毛ずい in place of the standard 難しい

2 In this sentence we see あんま which is Kansai-ben’s version of standard Japanese’s あまり
Tsunemi: Did you already call Tomie?

Kyohei: Huh? Why?

Tsunemi: (We’re) supposed to do English homework with her tonight, right?

Kyohei: That’s right! I already forgot!

Another thing to note in this conversation is how the “せや” is repeated twice – in Kansai-ben many words and expressions are often repeated twice for emphasis.

In addition to replacing the “そう’n” from “そうだね” and “そうだ,” せ is also frequently used to replace the “そう’n” from other word combinations in standard Japanese. Let’s review what we already know, and add a few more to the list, making note of how the だ’s are replaced with や’s:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>意味</th>
<th>標準語</th>
<th>関西弁</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>That’s right; That’s so</td>
<td>そうだ</td>
<td>せや</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s right, isn’t it; That’s right!</td>
<td>そうだね</td>
<td>せやなぁ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Because of that; That’s why</td>
<td>そうだから</td>
<td>せやから</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>That’s so, but…; That’s true, however…</td>
<td>そうだけど</td>
<td>せやけど</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If that’s the case; If such is true…</td>
<td>そうだったら</td>
<td>せやったら</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now let’s look at these in use in a typical conversation between two college boys:

Tsunemi: トミエはかわいいやろ?

Kyohei: せやけど、彼氏おるよ。

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3 In standard Japanese “tonight” is usually said 今晚 or 今夜, however in the Kansai area it is common to hear 今日の夜 instead

4 Here we encounter the Kansai-ben word おる which replaces Standard Japanese’s いる, meaning “to exist,” which will be further introduced in Chapter 13
Tsunemi: Don’t you think Tomie is cute?

Kyohei: Yeah she is, but she has a boyfriend.

Tsunemi: Really? I was thinking of asking her on a date, but if that’s the case I give up.

In the last line of the conversation, note how when Tsunemi uses the expression そうなんだ (そうなんだ in standard Japanese) he doesn’t change the そう into せ. This goes to illustrate that people in Kansai don’t change every そう into せ. For example, the expression そうなんだ is quite common. The best strategy is to listen to what people around you say, and then emulate how they use it.