This song from Raj Kapoor’s 1955 film Shree 420 must have graced almost as many Hindi classrooms as it has cinemas. It addresses cultural authenticity, contrasting imported items on the one hand with an abiding Indianness of spirit on the other. Ironically, while Kapoor’s filmic persona seeks to promote Indianness, it actually derives from the ‘tramp’ character developed forty years earlier, in Hollywood, by the British actor Charlie Chaplin.

Linguistically speaking, the interesting question about the Hindi (or rather, Urdu) usage in this song is: why मेरा जूता rather than मेरे जूते? The answer lies in the fact that जूता derives from Sanskrit युक्त, a pair, and thence from युक्त yoked, joined. Raj Kapoor has a pair of Japanese shoes!

Sanskrit युक्त is a participial adjective of type that is common in formal Hindi: examples include लिखते, संपादित, प्रकाशित published, and पठित read (from the root पढ़, source of पढ़ना). These -ते / -तत endings are cognate with the endings -ed, -en etc, in the English participles that translate them.

युक्त itself derives from the Sanskrit root यूक्त (from PIE *yeug-) that also yields such words as योग and, in turn, its many derivatives and manifestations (such as yoga in English). The sense of yoking, joining, connecting, pairing is typically involved. Another cognate is the Latinate English word ‘jugular’, referring to the neck (which, as you may have noticed, joins the head to the body!)

Here is CDIAL:

| йuktа | 10479 йuktа ‘joined, yoked ’ RV., ‘engaged in ’ MBh., ‘fit, suitable ’ Mn., n. ‘ team ’ ŠBr., yuktaka -- n. ’pair ’ Pat. [- ‘yukna --. -- ýuyj] |

Pa. yutta -- ‘yoked, coupled, furnished, suitable’, "aka -- ‘proper’; As. yuta -- m. ‘subordinate official’; Pk. ķutta -- ‘joined’; S. juto pp. of jumbatu ‘to be engaged in’ s.v. yunākti; L. juttā pp. of jovan ‘to yoke’ s.v. yójāyati, awān. jot ‘yoked’, juttun ‘to be yoked’; P. juttā ‘to be joined, be yoked’ (caus. jūtānum), jutā ‘to be engaged in’; G. jut n. ‘a carriage to which bullocks are yoked’, jūtnā ‘to be yoked’; Si. yut ‘engaged on, endowed with’, yuta ‘joined’, yutu ‘suitable, clever’; <-> Gy. rum. ķuto ‘yoke, pair’; Sh. (Lor.) yuto ‘pair (of anything)’; S. jutī f. ‘pair of shoes’; L. juttī f. ‘pair of shoes’, (Shahpur) ‘a shoe’; P. jutt, juttā m. ‘large shoe’ (jūt, jūṭā m. ← H.), juttī f. ‘shoe’, jutri f. ‘wretched little shoe’; WPah.bhad. jūtō ‘pair of shoes’; Ku. juto, pl. ķuvātā ‘shoe’, N. juto; A. zota ‘shoe, boot’; B. jut, jutā, jutī ‘shoe’, Or. jutā, Bi. jūtā, juttā, jūtī, Aw.lakh. jūtā, H. jut, jūṭā m., jūṭī f., G. jūṭā n., jūṭī f.; M. jūṭē n. ‘pair of sandals’, jutī f. ‘shoe’; ← For formation of new pres. stems in MIA. see yunākti.
Returning to our featured word जुटा, we find that feet and shoes have particular significance in terms of cultural values, rituals, and psychological associations. Feet ‘mean’ different things in different traditions; but their defilement by contact with public outside space often yields associations of impurity, and the soles of the feet should not be exposed to another person’s sight while sitting. To show respect to a person by touching their feet (चारण-स्पर्श, पायलागी) is to acknowledge a hierarchy of respect: even the feet of the revered person are worthy of reverence. Shoes, too, are considered impure (especially if made of leather), and are removed on entering honoured spaces; a shoe-beating brings a very particular kind of disgrace. Such implications underlie many of the idioms listed in OHED for जुटा and its feminine diminutive जुती —

The world has changed in sixty years. Nowadays, मेरी गाड़ी है जापानी….but my जुटा, like so many of my manufactured possessions, is from China.