Manipur had been known throughout the ages as Meitrabak, Kangleipak or Meeteileipak[5] as well as by more than twenty other names.[6] Sanamahi Laikan wrote that Manipur's new nomenclature was adopted in the eighteenth century during the reign of Meidingu Pamheiba. According to Sakok Lamlen, the area had different names according to the era. During the Hayachak period it was known as Mayai Koiren poirei namthak saronpung or Tilli Koktong Ahanba, then in the Khunungchak period as Meera Pongthoklam. Thereafter during the Langbachak era, it became Tilli Koktong Leikoiren and finally Muwapalli in the Konnachak epoch.

During the latter part of its history, Manipur and its people were known by different names to their neighbours. The Shans or Pongs called the area Cassay, the Burmese Kathe, and the Assamese Meklee. In the first treaty between the British East India Company and Meidingu Chingthangkhomba (Bhagyachandra) signed in 1762, the kingdom was recorded as Meckley. Bhagyachandra and his successors issued coins engraved with the title of Manipureshwar, or lord of Manipur and the name Meckley was discarded. Later on, the Sanskritisation work, Dharani Samhita (1825–34) popularized the legends of the derivation of Manipur's name.