1. The synonymy of what is well known as the PAncaRatra is thus given in the PAdma-tantra (one of the 108 tantras or SamhitAs):-

SUris suhrid bhAgavatas sAtvatah pancAlavit |  
EkAntikas tanmayas' ca pancArtrika ity api ||  
(iv, 2, 88)

From this it is evident that pAncarAtra = BhAgavata = SAtvata = EkAntika.

2. The Sastra or Science (of the worship of the One Gog = Monotheism) is also called EkAyana, which means the Only Way (Monotheism). For, as is stated in Isvara SamhitA, NArada tells the Sages -

MoksAyanAya vai panthA etad anyo na vidyate |  
TasmAd EkAyanam nAma pravadanti manIsinah ||  
(i, 18)

i.e. "whereas there is no other Path than this One to Emancipation (moksa), the wise call this by the name EkAyana"

3. This science is also known as the MUla-Veda or Root Science (or Root knowledge), inasmuch as VAzureva is at the Root of all Knowledge, as the following verse explicitly says -

Mahato Veda-vrksasya mUla-bhUto mahAn ayam |  
Skandha-bhUtA Rg-AdyAs te sAkha-bhUtAs’ ca yoginah ||  
Jagan-mUlasya Vedasya VAzurevasya mukhyatah |  
PratipAdakatA siddhA MUla-VEdAkhyatA dvijAh ||  
Adyam BhAgavatam dharmam Adi-bhUtE krte yuge |  
MAnavA yogya-bhUtAs te anutisthanti nityas’ah ||  
(Id. 1, 24-26)

i.e. "This (Science) is the root of the Veda-Tree; the Rg and others are its trunk and branches. The (science) is called by the name MUla-Veda (=Root-Veda), because it is an expositin of VAzureva, the Root of the Universe. This is the original BhAgavata-Dharma which the krta age worthy men observed always"

4. That this Ancient Science is Ancient, and not originated by VAzureva, the Son of Vasudeva = Kr*shna, is evident from the word VAzureva, meaning "He who permeates all", though, grammatically it is also a patronymic, viz, "Son of Vasudeva." For firstly, the word VAzureva
occurs in the Taittiriya Upanisad passage known as the Visnu-GAyatri, Secondly, we have in the PAdma-Tantra -

Vasudeva-sutasyApI sthApanam VA$udeva-vat || (iii, 29, 28)
i.e. "The installation of the Son of Vasudeva (krsna) is like that of VA$udeva (the Ancient One)".

Thirdly, that the EkAyanA Science is one of the Ancient Sciences learnt by NArada, is evident from what NArada himself tells SanatkumAra in the ChAndoga Upanisat -

" Rg-Vedam Bhagavo 'dhyemi Yajur-VEdam SAmA-Vedam Atharvanam caturtham IthihAsa-PurAnam pancamam VedAnAm Vedam Pitryam RAs'im Daivam Nidhim VAko-vAkyam EkAyanam." (vii, 1, 2)
i.e. "O SanatkumAra, I have learnt Rg-Veda, Yajur-Veda, SAmA-Veda Atharvanam, ..., EkAyanam."
Also, See the word occurring in the same Upanisat vii, 1, 4; 2, 1; 5, 2; 7, 1.

Fourthly, Sri Kr*shna Himself says in the Bhagavat GlTa (vii, 19)-

VA$udevah sarvam iti sa mahAtmA sudurlabhah.
i.e. "That great soul is hard to find who knows 'VA$udeva is all';" Showing that the Bhagavata or VA$udeva religion was not originated or invented in Kr*shna's days, but was existent from time primeval.

Further, Sri Kr*shna confirms this position, viz., the eternity of the BhAgvata Religion, by telling Arjuna that what he taught him now was Ancient religion, which from time to time is forgotten by men, and He comes and revives it. Read Bhagavad-GlTa, iv, 1-3 -

Imam VivasvAt yogam proktavA n ahA avyayam ||
VivasvA$m manAve prAha manur IksvAkave 'bravit |
Evam paramapArA-prAptam imam rAjarasyo viduh ||
Sa kAlen-eha mahAtA yogo nastah Parantapa |
Sa ev-AyAm mayA te 'dya yogah proktah purAtanah ||
i.e. "It was I (the Ancient, not merely as Kr*shna now) who taught this Devine Science (Yoga) to VivasvA$n (The Sun). VivasvA$n taught Manu; and Manu taught IksvAku. That this is thus traditionally derived, the Royal Sages know. But by long lapse of time the Science was lost. And this Ancient Science has again by Me now told thee, O Foe-dread (Arjuna)".

Here "Royal Sages Know" does not mean that only the Royal Sages or Kshatriiyas know, and that BrAhmanas therefore do not know; nor does it mean that Kshatriiyas originated it without reference to the BrAhmanas. Also, the term "Royal" is also interpretable as "those Sages who have attained royalty or eminence in the Devine Science"; and therefore need not necescessarily mean Kshatriiyas. Besides, if the Ancient, as He says, taught VivasvA$n, may it be adduced from this that the Ancient was a Kshatriya, or that VivasvA$n (the Sun) is a Kshatriya? It is simply NArAyana, the Primeval God, teaching NArada to begin with - NArada, the mind-born son of
Brahma and therefore a divine BrAhmana (Brahmarishi) - as many be seen from Is'vara-
SamhitA, i, 4, 11; -
NArAyanam tapasyantam Nara-NArayanas'ramo
Samsovantas sadA bhaktyA mokshopAya-vivitsavah
SamshitA munayas sarve NArAyana-parAyanAh
KAlena kena cit svargaN Arayana-didrkshayA
TatrAvatIrya devar*shih NAradas sa kutUhalah
Dr*shtA NArayanan devam namaskr*tya kr*tAnjalih
PulakAncita-sarvAngah prshr*shtya-vadano munih
StitvA nAnAvidhaih stotraiH pranamya ca muhur muhuh
PUjayAmAsa tam Devam NArAyanam anAmayam
Atha NArAyano devah tam Aha munipungavam
Munayo hy atra tishthanti prArthhayA Hareh padam
EteshAm SAtvatam s'Astrom upadestum tvam arhasi
Ityuktv-antardadhe Sriman-NArAyana-munis tadA
i.e. "the Sages (munis) lovingly served NArAyana absorbed in meditation at Nara-NArAyan-
As'rama (Badari in the Himalayas). Wishing to see NArAyana, NArada descended from Svarga;
and seeing Him, prostrated and stood up with hands clasped, with joy beaming in his face and
thrilling in his frame. He burst forth in praise, again and again casting homself at His feet. he
worshiped (thus) the Holy NArAyana. Then spake NArAyana to the sage-chief thus: 'The Sages
sit here praying for Hari's feet and Thou art fit to teach them the SAtvata-Sastra (= PAnca-
rAtra).' So saying Sriman NArAyana made Himself invisibls".

Also read BhAradvAja-SamhitA cited under par. 6 infra, as also iii, 41 (id.) and its Paris'ista, 1,
88.

As to the primordial or prmeval character of this BhAgavata (=VAusudevic or PAncaAtra)
religion, further reference is invited to MahA-nArAyana, Brahma-bindu, Mukti, RAmatApani
and VAusudeva UPanisads.

5. That PAncaAtra is Vedic and possesses Authority (so that its precepts and practices are to be
followed by all those who own allegiance to Veda) is expressed in the PAdma-tantra verse -
S'ruti-mUlam idam Tantram pramAnam kalpa-sUtravat.    (i, 1, 88.)
i.e."This tantra is S'ruti-origined or S'ruti-rooted, and is an Authority like, for example, the
Kalpa-S'utra".

6. The meaning of the term pAncaAtra is thus explained -

(a) PAdma-tantra: The question is put -

Mahopanisad-Akhyasya s'Astrasya-Asya mahAmate !
PAncaAtra-samAkhy-Asau katham loke pravartate    (i, 1, 681/2-69)
i.e. "How, O wise sire! is this Mahopanishad currently known in the world as PAncaAtra?
To which Samvarta is made to answer thus:-
Pan-etàrAni s'ÀstrAni rÀtriyante mahÀnty api
Tat-sannidhau samÀkhyaAsau tena loke pravartate.
i.e. "Because the five other great S'astras are like darkness in the presence of this (PAncarAtra),
thence is it currently known by the term PAncarAtra".

The other Five S'astras are -
(1) Yoga (author Virinca or Hiranya-garbha)
(2) SÀnkhya (author kapila)
(3) Buddha (author Buddhi-mUrti)
(4) Arhata (author Arhata or Jina)
(5) KÀpÀla, Suddha-S'ai'va, PÀsûpata (a group-author S'iva).

or it may be also thus interpreted:-

Pancatvam athavà yadvat dipyamAne divAkaRe
Rcchanti rÀtrayàs tadvat itarAni tad-antike.
i.e. "As when the Sun rises, the nights die, so others die in the vicinity of this (PAncarAtra)".

(b) NArala-PAncarAtra

RÀtram ca jnAna-vacanam jnAnam panca-vidham smr*tam
TEn-edàm Panca-rÀtram ca pravadànti manishinah. (i, 1, 44)
i.e. "RÀtram is a term signifying knowledge and because of this there are five (panca) kinds,
therefore the wise call it Panca-rÀtram".

The five kinds of knowledge (read op. cit., verses 45-56) are said to be:
(1) Tattva (this is sÀttvika)
(2) Mukti-prada (also sÀttvika)
(3) Bhakti-prada (this is nairgunya)
(4) Yaugika (this is rÀjasà)
(5) Vaishayika (this is tÀmasà).

(c) Sri-Pras'na-SamhitÀ, ii, 40, states -
RÀtrir aJnAnam ity uktam
Panc-ety aJnAna-nAs'akam.
i.e. "RÀtri, night, means nescience, and pane, derived from the root pac, to cook, means that
which 'cooks', i.e. destroys that nescience". Hence PancarAtra is the science which dispels
ignorance.

Also (d) Ahirbudhnya-Samhita xi-64, 65, 66 (?) and Kapinjala-Samhita, chap. 1, may be
referred to.

7. The AcÀryas or Teachers in succession who promulgated these doctrines (omitting
NAralyana and NArala, vide par. 4 supra) are thus stated:
PuraA TotAdri-s’ikhare S’Andilyo ’pi mahA-munih
SamAhita-manA bhUtvA tapas taptvA mahattaram
AnekAni sahasrAni var*shAnam tapaso ’ntatah
DvAparasya yugasy-Ante Adau kali-yugasya ca
SAkshAt SamkarshanAt labdhvA vedam EkAyanabhidam
Samantum Jaiminim caiva Bhrgum caiva-AupagAyanam
MaunyjAyanam ca tam Vedam samyag adhyApayat purA
tAtah (Is’vara-SamhitA, i, 38-41)

i.e. "In days past, on TotAdri peak, S’Andilya the great sage sat fixed in severe austerities (tapas) for many years. In the end he obtained from Samkarshana - in the interim between DvApara age and kali age- the Veda going by the name of EkAyana, and taught them well to Sumantu, Jaimini, Bhrgu, AupagAyana and MaunyjAyana".

And then in viii, 175-7, of the same Samhita, NArada tells -
EkAntino mahAbhAgAh S’athakopa-purassarAh
KshonyAm kr*r-AvatArA ye lokojjIvana-hetunA
S’AndilyAdyAs' ca ye c-Anye PancarAtra-pravartakAh
PrahlAdas' c-aiva SugrIvo VAyusUnur VibhUshanah
Ye c-Anye SanakAdyAs' ca PancakAla-parAyanah

i.e "Sathakopa and others, great devout saints, became incarnate on earth to save creature. Sanaka and others, Sandilya and others, prahalAda, SugrIva, the Wind-Son (HanumAn), VibhIshana and others - the strict observers of the Five Timed Injunctions (PancakAla)- these are the Promulgators of the PancarAtra.

With reference to SandilyA, attention is invited to No 10, SAndilya-VidyA and No. 32 S’riman NyAsa-VidyA in the Table of the 32 VidyAs, pp 129-30 of our Bhagavad-GItA with RAmAnuja’s Commentary.

Next, after Sathakopa and others, comes RAmAnuja. For NArAyana tells Bala-bharads (or Bala-rAma, the brother of Kr*shna) thus (Is’vara SamhitA, xx, 278-80):

Asti te vimalA bhaktih Mayi YAdava-nandana |
Prathamam S’esha-rUpo Me kaimkaryam akarod bhavAn ||
Tatas tu Lakshmano bhUtvA MAm ArAdhItvA iha |
IdAnIm api MAm yastum Balabhadra ! tvam arhasi ||
kalAv api yuge bhUyah kas’eid bhUtvA dvijottamah |
NAAnA-vidhAair bhoga-jAlair arcanam Me karishyasi ||
i.e. "O Son of Yadu-race (BalarAma) ! thou hast clean (or pure) devotion (or love) for Me. Thou, first as S’esha didst the great service for Me. Then next didst thou worship me as Lakshmana. Thou art now serving me as Balabharada. Thou shalt again in Kali age be born as a great BrAhmana (=RAmAnuja), and shalt worship me with many things of joy".

Br*had-Brahma-SamhitA makes this clear, thus:

Dvija-rUpena bhavitA yA tu SamkarshanAbhidhA ||
DvAparAnte kaler Adan pAsanda-pracure jane |
RAmanuj-eti bhavitA Vishnu-dharma-pravartakah ||
S'riranges'a-dayA-pAtram viddhi RAmAnuja munim |
Yena sandarsitah panthA VaikunthAkhyasya sadmanah ||
PArAm-aikAntiko dharma bhava-pAs'a-vimocakah |
Yatr-AnanyatAYA proktam Avayoh pAda-sevanam ||
KAlen-AchhAdito dharma madIyo 'yam varAnane ! |
TadA mayA pravr*tto 'yam tat-kAl-Ocita-mUrtinA ||
Vishvakse-n-Adibhir bhaktaI S'athAri-pramukhair dvijaih |
RAmAnujena muninA kalau samsthAm upeshyati ||

i.e. "'My Samkarshana part (O Sri),' says NArAyan, 'is the form of a BrAhmana, by the name RAmAnuja, which it is going to take, after the DvApara age and in the kAli age, to expound the Vishnu-dharma (=BhAgavata Religion), when the world will be full of heretics or renegades (pAsanda). Know that RAmAnuja will be the specially favoured of S'riRanga (-natha) and he will show the way to the Realm known as Viakuntha. The One-pointed Religion exclusively to be rendered to Thee and Me (=Sriman NArAyana) the religion which delivers (creatures) from the bonds of samsAra (material existence) becomes dimmed by age, O fair faced one! According to the requirements of the age, I take many forms, and act by means of My devotees such as Vishvakse-na, Sathakopa, etc., and RAmAnuja in the Kali age.'.".

BhAradvAja-SamhitA iv, 92, teaches -
Abhyarthito jagad-dhAtryA S'riyA NArAyanas svayam
UpAdis'ad imam yogam iti me NAradAt s'rutam,
i.e "Prayed to by Sri, the Universal Mother, NArAyana Himself taught (Her) this yoga. So did I hear from NArada".

From the above it will be seen how the hierarchy (Guru-paramparA) if the S'ri-Vaishnavas or Sri-Sampradhayam came to be constituted thus:

(1) NArAyana
(2) S'ri
(3) Vishvakse-na = Senes'a = the Lord of the Hosts (the Eternals)
(4) S'athakopa or S'athagopa (the Mortal-Immortal)
(5) The others between (4) and (6)
(6) RAmAnuja
(7) Succession after (6), up to one's own Holy Preceptor.

In the work called VArta-mAlA (or Garland of Talks), p 98, 202nd Talk (Telugu edition, Madras, 1887, SarasvatI-BhandAra Press), a question was asked how the efficaciousness of the Apostolic Pedigree would be affected