

One end of a light elastic string, of natural length  $a$  and modulus of elasticity  $kmg$ , is attached to a fixed point  $A$ . The other end of the string is attached to a particle  $P$  of mass  $4m$ . The particle  $P$  hangs in equilibrium a distance  $x$  vertically below  $A$ .

**(a)** Show that  $k = \frac{4a}{x-a}$ . [1]

An additional particle, of mass  $2m$ , is now attached to  $P$  and the combined particle is released from rest at the original equilibrium position of  $P$ . When the combined particle has descended a distance  $\frac{1}{3}a$ , its speed is  $\frac{1}{3}\sqrt{ga}$ .

**(b)** Find  $x$  in terms of  $a$ . [6]