

中国激光

基于 Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 复合晶体的高效被动调 Q 激光器

李永智^{1,2}, 张萌^{1,2}, 闫东钰^{1,2}, 朱光³, 储玉喜^{1,2*}, 胡明列^{1,2}

¹天津大学精密仪器与光电子工程学院超快激光研究室, 天津 300072;

²天津大学精密仪器与光电子工程学院光电信息技术教育部重点实验室, 天津 300072;

³国科世纪激光技术(天津)有限公司, 天津 300072

摘要 通过实验证明了利用中心波长为 940 nm 的半导体激光器泵浦 Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 复合晶体可获得高效率的被动调 Q 激光输出。研究了耦合输出镜透过率、泵浦光斑大小对基于 Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 和 Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 复合晶体的被动调 Q 激光器的输出参数的影响。当泵浦功率为 17 W 时, 基于 Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 复合晶体的被动调 Q 激光器的最大平均输出功率为 7.41 W、斜率效率为 57.0%、光-光效率为 43.6%、脉冲宽度为 4.6 ns、脉冲重复频率为 25.5 kHz、脉冲能量为 290.6 μJ、峰值功率为 63.2 kW, 与基于 Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 复合晶体的情况相比, 最大平均输出功率、脉冲能量和脉冲峰值功率分别提高了 5.6%、14.7% 和 22.2%。同时, 对比了在相同输出功率下基于两种晶体的输出激光的 M^2 , 发现在相同输出功率下, 与基于 Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 复合晶体的情况相比, 基于 Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 复合晶体的输出激光具有更低的 M^2 。最终, 通过实验结果对比得出, 基于 Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 复合晶体的被动调 Q 激光器具有更优的输出参数。

关键词 激光器; 掺镱激光器; 二极管泵浦; 被动调 Q 激光器; 固态激光器

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1 引言

随着科技的进步, 人们对超快激光的研究日渐深入, 超快激光的产生原理逐渐清晰, 各类应用也层出不穷^[1-5]。被动调 Q 固体激光器具有超窄脉冲宽度(纳秒或者亚纳秒量级)、高峰值功率(数十甚至上百千瓦)、高光束质量、低成本以及可小型化的特点, 因此应用相当广泛, 如激光点火、激光加工、激光雷达、非线性频率转换等^[6-16]。近年来, 利用热键合技术将激光晶体与可饱和吸收体键合到一起而形成的复合晶体逐渐进入人们的视野。与分离晶体相比, 键合晶体可以进一步缩短腔长从而压缩脉冲宽度、减少激光腔的损耗、消除空气间隙、避免空气击穿导致的晶体表面镀膜损坏。

目前, 复合晶体被动调 Q 激光器的研究主要集中在 Nd:YAG/Cr:YAG 晶体^[17-23]上, 而关于基于 Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG 复合晶体的被动调 Q 激光器的研究较少。与 Nd:YAG 相比, Yb:YAG 具有很多优势, 如上能级寿命较长、吸收带宽较宽、量子效率高, 进而可以大大降低晶体的热负荷且在高掺杂情况下不会发生浓度猝灭现象^[24-25]。因此, 研究 Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG 复合晶体对于被动调 Q 激光器的进一步发展具有十分重要的意义。Šulc 等^[26]使用 Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG 复合晶体得到了脉冲宽度为 1.6 ns、脉冲能量为 74 μJ、斜率效率为 17% 的调 Q 脉冲输出。Dong 等^[27]使用高强度激光二极管泵浦得到了脉冲宽度为 3 ns、脉冲能量为 180 μJ、输出效率为 44% 的调 Q 脉冲输出。随后, Dong 等^[28]又利

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通信作者: *chuyuxi@tju.edu.cn

用准连续波泵浦的方式,采用较低透过率的 Cr:YAG 得到了峰值功率为 1.08 MW、脉冲宽度为 1.46 ns、斜率效率为 30% 的调 Q 脉冲输出。然而,利用复合晶体的被动调 Q 激光存在输出效率不高的问题,出现该现象的部分原因是晶体内部产热严重,存在强烈的热透镜效应,进而激光腔内模式不稳定。除此之外,Yb:YAG 具有准三能级结构,当晶体温度增加时,Yb:YAG 下能级的粒子数会增加。此时,Yb:YAG 对波长为 1030 nm 的信号光的自吸收效应会增强,进而导致转换效率降低^[29]。为了降低热效应带来的影响,在复合晶体的可饱和吸收体一侧再多键合一块无掺杂的 YAG,形成 Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 复合晶体^[30-31],可有效缓解热透镜效应,进而光束质量和激光输出参数得到了改善。除此之外,文献[32]指出制备技术不完善可能会导致复合晶体中存在 Yb,Cr:YAG 共掺介质层,而介质层会对激光的输出功率、脉冲能量、光束质量等造成负面影响。目前,Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG 复合晶体被动调 Q 输出的斜率效率最高为 52.3%,对应的光-光效率为 41%^[33]。

为了进一步提升调 Q 激光的输出效率,本文提出一种四层键合结构的复合晶体,即 Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG,其中最外层 YAG 的作用是为 Cr:YAG 散热。中间层的 YAG 不仅起到散热的作用,降低了 Yb:YAG 的自吸收效应,还可以有效避免 Yb:YAG 和 Cr:YAG 之间产生共掺介质层。采用端面泵浦的方式,对 Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 和 Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 复合晶体进行对比实验。通过研究泵浦功率、耦合输出镜透过率以及非球面透镜组准直-聚焦比例(泵浦光斑大小)对平均输出功率、脉冲宽度、重复频率等参数的影响,最终获得了高效率、高功率、高光束质量的被动调 Q 脉冲输出。基于 Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 晶体被动调 Q 激光器,在泵浦功率为 17 W 时,获得了最大平均功率为 7.41 W 的输出。此时,斜率效率为 57.0%、光-光效率为 43.6%、输出脉冲宽度为 4.6 ns、重复频率为 25.5 kHz、输出脉冲能量 290.6 μJ、脉冲峰值功率为 63.2 kW。与基于 Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 晶体的被动调 Q 激光器相比,输出功率、脉冲能量、脉冲峰值功率分别提高了 5.6%、14.7%、22.2%。同时,对比了基于两种晶体的被动调 Q 激光器在相同输出功率下的光束质量因子 M^2 ,发现基于 Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 复合晶体的输出激光

具有更低的 M^2 值。最终,通过实验证实了基于 Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 复合晶体的被动调 Q 激光器具有更好的激光脉冲输出参数。

2 实验设置

复合晶体被动调 Q 实验中采用的实验装置如图 1 所示。泵浦源为中心波长为 940 nm、输出功率为 17 W 的光纤耦合半导体激光器(LD,光纤纤芯直径为 105 μm、数值孔径为 0.22)。利用焦距分别为 20 mm、40 mm 的非球面聚光透镜 F1、F2 准直和聚焦泵浦光,聚焦光斑直径为 210 μm。实验中采用的是利用热键合方法制备的复合晶体,将原子数分数为 5% 的 Yb:YAG 作为激光增益介质,其厚度为 5 mm。将端面镀有对波长为 940 nm 的光高透的膜层(透过率大于 97%)和对波长为 1030 nm 的光高反的膜层(反射率大于 99.8%)的 Yb:YAG 晶体作为整个谐振腔的端镜。将 1.3 mm 厚的 Cr:YAG 作为可饱和吸收体,初始透过率为 90%。复合晶体最外层是 YAG 晶体,无掺杂的 YAG 单晶的厚度为 2 mm,且 YAG 晶体表面镀有对波长为 940 nm 和 1030 nm 的光减反的膜层(反射率小于 0.3%)。整个复合晶体被固定在铜热沉架中,在晶体与铜的接触面之间放置铜箔以获得高的导热系数,从而缓解晶体热效应带来的影响。此外,用热电致冷器(TEC)精确控制铜热沉温度到 20 °C。将透过率为 40%~70% 的平面镜作为耦合输出镜(OC),OC 与复合晶体端面的距离为 3 mm,整体腔长约为 13.3 mm。

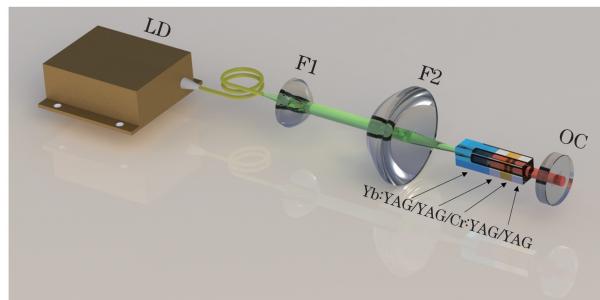


图 1 基于 Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 复合晶体的被动调 Q 激光器示意图

Fig. 1 Schematic diagram of passively Q-switched laser based on Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG composite crystal

3 实验结果与讨论

在不同 OC 透过率 T 下,基于 Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 和 Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 复合晶体的被动调 Q 激光器的平均输出功率与泵浦

功率的关系如图2所示。可以看出,腔内损耗与OC透过率成正比,即激光阈值随OC透过率增加而增加。随着泵浦功率的增加,平均输出功率近似线性增加,并在最大泵浦功率17 W下获得最大平均输出功率。基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器在T为40%,50%,60%,70%下的斜率效率分别为53.3%,57.0%,50.6%,49.7%。在保持腔长不变的情况下,将复合晶体更

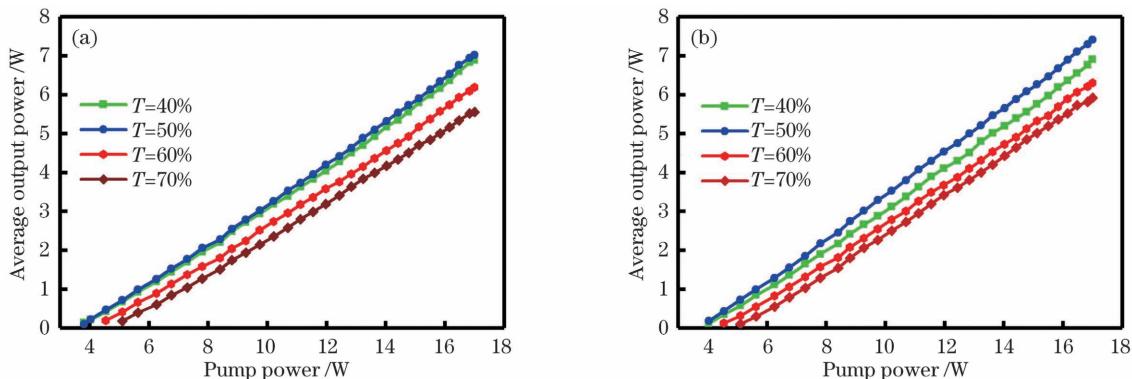
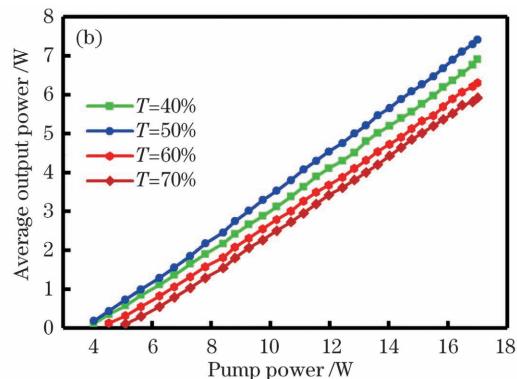


图2 不同复合晶体下,平均输出功率随泵浦功率的变化。(a) Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG;(b) Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG

Fig. 2 Average output power varying with pump power under different composite crystals. (a) Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG; (b) Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG

图3(a)显示了在T=50%的情况下,基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器中泵浦光在不同准直-聚焦比例下的平均输出功率。1:1,1:2,1:3,1:4准直-聚焦比例对应的泵浦光斑直径分别为105,210,315,420 μm。当泵浦功率低于14 W时,1:1准直-聚焦比例的泵浦光的平均输出功率大于1:2准直-聚焦比例的泵浦光平均输出功率。当泵浦功率高于14 W时,1:2准直-聚焦比例的泵浦光的平均输出功率大于1:1准直-聚焦比例的泵浦光的平均输出功率,这是因为在高功率下1:1准直-聚焦比例情况下的腔内热效应更为严重。图3(b)~(d)分别展示了使用1:1,1:2,1:3准直-聚焦比例的非球面透镜组下两种晶体的平均输出功率。可以看出,在低泵浦功率下基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG和Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的平均输出功率几乎相同。随着泵浦功率的增加,基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的平均输出功率高于基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的平均输出功率,主要原因是Yb:YAG和Cr:YAG之间的YAG晶体起到了预期之中的散热和隔离作用,不仅缓解了热效应和自吸收效应,还避免了介质层的产生。在1:1准直-聚焦比例情况下,基于两种复合晶

换为Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG晶体。基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG晶体的被动调Q激光器在T为40%,50%,60%,70%下的斜率效率分别为52.2%,53.2%,49.7%,46.7%。当OC的透过率为50%、泵浦功率为17 W时,基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG和Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG被动调Q激光器的最大平均输出功率分别为7.02 W和7.41 W,对应的光-光效率分别为41.3%和43.6%。



体的被动调Q激光器的平均输出功率近似相同。在泵浦功率为17 W时,基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG和Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的平均输出功率分别为6.71 W和6.81 W。与基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG的情况相比,基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的平均输出功率提高了约1.5%。在1:2准直-聚焦比例情况下,基于两种复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的最大平均输出功率分别为7.02 W和7.41 W,与基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG的情况相比,基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的平均输出功率提高了约5.6%。而在1:3准直-聚焦比例情况下,基于两种复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的最大平均输出功率分别为4.44 W和4.85 W,与基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG的情况相比,基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的平均输出功率提高了约9.2%。可以发现,晶体上聚焦的泵浦光斑的直径越大,基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的平均输出功率相较于基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的平均输出功率就提高得越多。但是,在1:4准直-聚焦比例情况下,泵浦光斑直径会增大到420 μm,此时激光模场增加、单

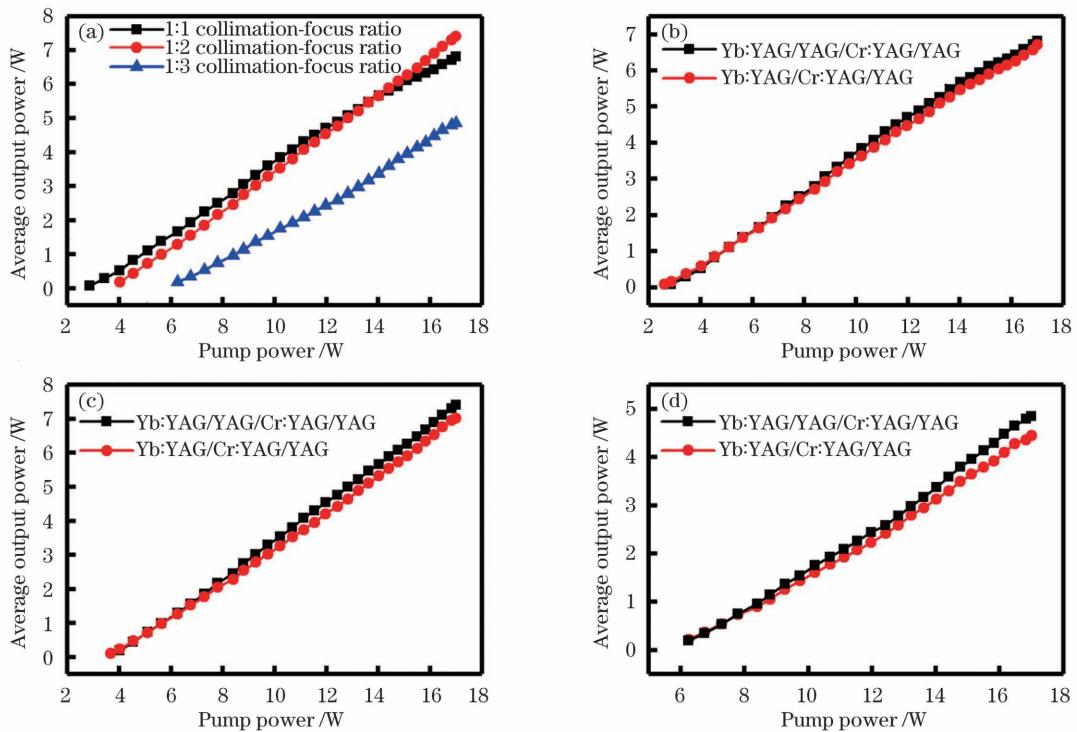


图3 不同非球面透镜组下,基于两种复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的平均输出功率对比。(a)基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器在不同准直-聚焦比例下的平均输出功率;(b)1:1准直-聚焦比例;(c)1:2准直-聚焦比例;(d)1:3准直-聚焦比例

Fig. 3 Comparison of average output power of passively Q-switched lasers based on two kinds of composite crystals under different aspheric lens groups. (a) Average output power of passively Q-switched laser based on Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG composite crystal at different collimation-focus ratios; (b) 1:1 collimation-focus ratio; (c) 1:2 collimation-focus ratio; (d) 1:3 collimation-focus ratio

脉冲能量大幅提升,会引起腔内激光峰值功率大幅提升并造成晶体镀膜损伤,故此时需要选择较高质量的镀膜。

当选取非球面透镜组准直-聚焦比例为1:2并设定OC透过率为50%时,基于两种复合晶体的被动调Q激光器可以得到最大的平均输出功率。此实验条件下,基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG和Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的脉冲重复频率、脉冲宽度、单脉冲能量以及峰值功率与泵浦功率的关系如图4所示。从图4(a)中可以发现,随着泵浦功率的增加,基于两种复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的重复频率均呈现线性增加的趋势,且在相同泵浦功率下基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的重复频率高于基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器。在泵浦功率为17 W时,两种激光器可获得最高的重复频率,分别为27.7 kHz和25.5 kHz。从图4(b)中可以发现,基于两种复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的脉冲宽度均随泵浦功率的增加而增加,基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合

晶体的被动调Q激光器的脉冲宽度从3.9 ns展宽到4.9 ns,基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的脉冲宽度从3.8 ns增加到4.6 ns。热效应是引起脉冲宽度增加的主要原因,Cr:YAG的初始透过率会在温度升高时增大^[34],初始透过率越大,脉冲宽度越宽。图4(c)、(d)分别显示了泵浦功率对单脉冲能量和峰值功率的影响。可以看出,随着泵浦功率的增加,脉冲能量先增加后基本保持不变,峰值功率存在先增加后下降的趋势。基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG和Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器在最大泵浦功率17 W下的单脉冲能量分别为253.4 μJ和290.6 μJ,峰值功率分别为51.7 kW和63.2 kW。从图3、4中可以发现,基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的平均输出功率、单脉冲能量和峰值功率均较高,但脉冲宽度和重复频率略有下降,这是因为中间层YAG的加入增加了Cr:YAG与泵浦聚焦位置间的距离,减小了泵浦对Cr:YAG的漂白,等效降低了Cr:YAG的初始透过率。

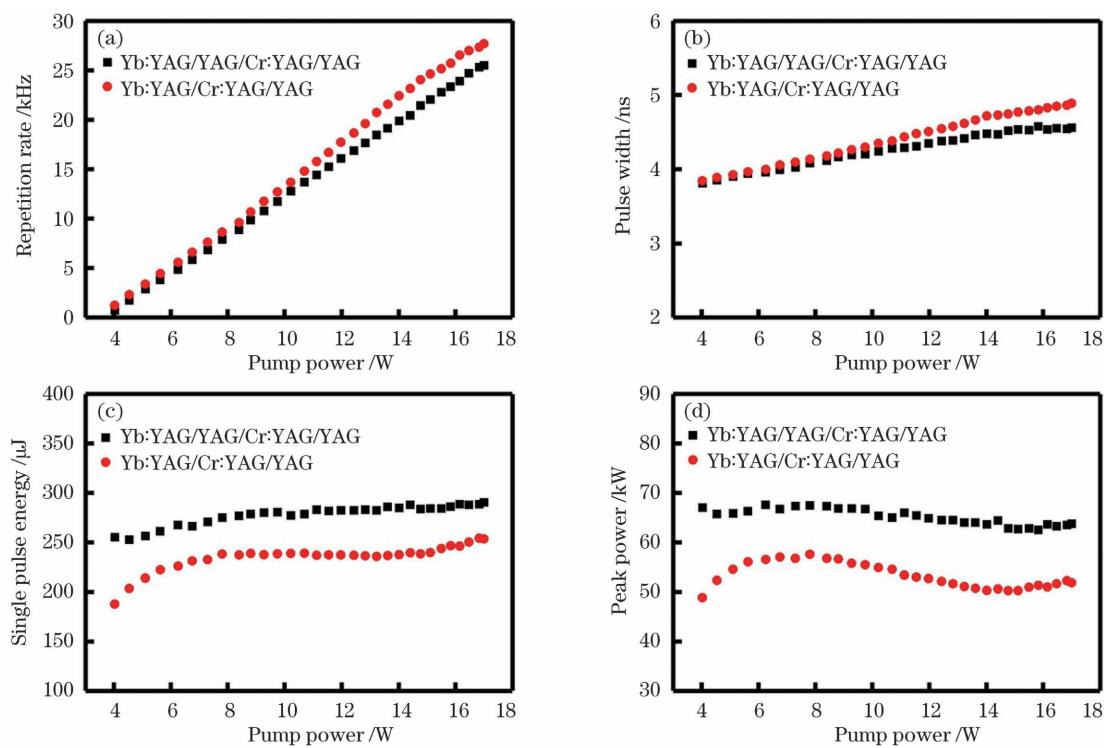


图4 基于两种复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的输出参数与泵浦功率的关系。(a)重复频率;(b)脉冲宽度;(c)单脉冲能量;(d)峰值功率

Fig. 4 Relationship between output parameters and pump power of passively Q-switched lasers based on two kinds of composite crystals. (a) Repetition rate; (b) pulse width; (c) single pulse energy; (d) peak power

在泵浦功率为 17 W 时,基于 Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 和 Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 复合

晶体的被动调 Q 激光器的脉冲序列和单脉冲波形如图5所示。此时,基于 Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/

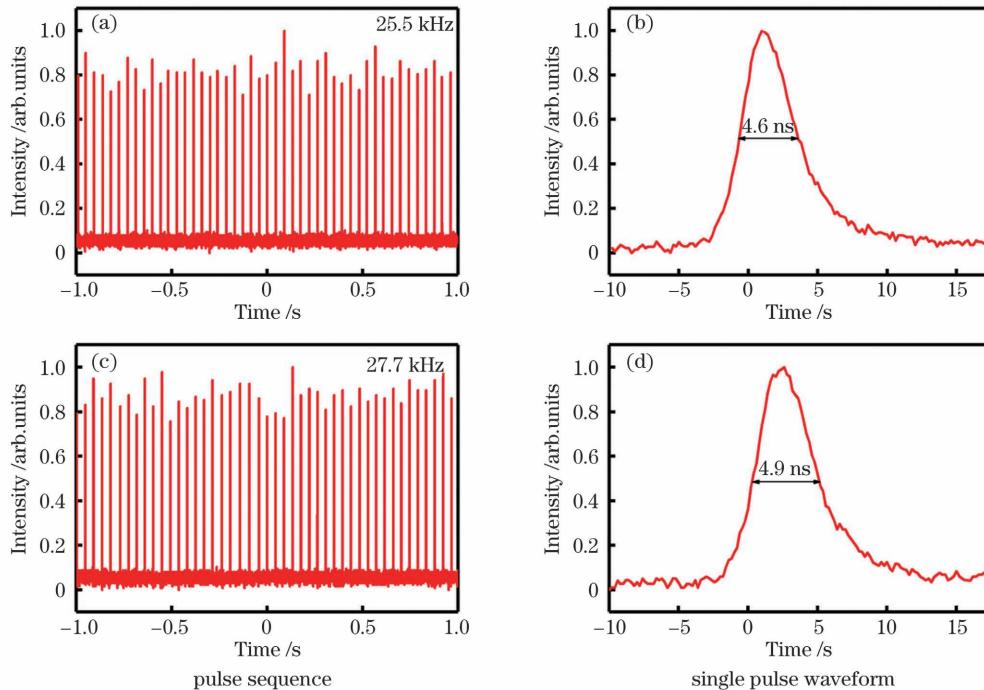


图5 基于不同复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的脉冲序列和单脉冲波形。(a)(b) Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG; (c)(d) Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG

Fig. 5 Pulse sequence and single pulse waveform of passively Q-switched laser based on different composite crystals. (a)(b) Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG; (c)(d) Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG

YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的脉冲重复频率为25.5 kHz、脉冲宽度为4.6 ns, 基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的脉冲重复频率为27.7 kHz、脉冲宽度为4.9 ns。基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG和Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的脉冲序列均方根(RMS)为1%, 脉冲序列均存在抖动, 该现象背后的物理机制为激光腔内存在多个具有不同增益和损耗的纵模, 而每个单纵模对应一个单独的激光脉冲, 即激光脉冲的能量强度和产生时间会不同, 进而引起了纵模对增益的竞争。

图6为当泵浦功率为7, 14, 17 W时, 基于两种复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的输出脉冲光谱。可

以发现, 随着泵浦功率的增加, 输出脉冲激光的中心波长向长波长方向漂移。基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的中心波长由1030.3 nm增加至1030.8 nm, 基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的中心波长由1030.3 nm增加至1030.6 nm。这是因为Yb:YAG晶体的发射光谱与晶体温度有关, 随着温度的增加, 中心波长向长波长漂移^[35]。泵浦功率的增加会导致腔内纵模数增加, 基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的输出光谱的半峰全宽从0.45 nm增加到0.54 nm, 基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的输出光谱的半峰全宽从0.77 nm增加到0.98 nm。

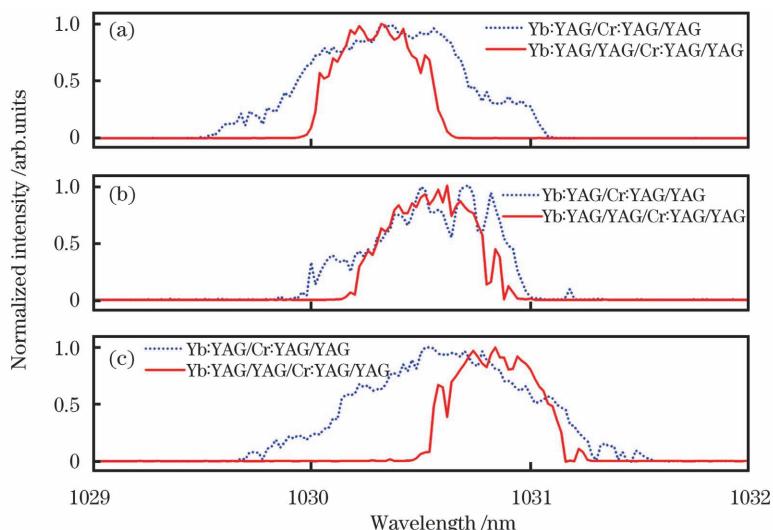


图6 在不同泵浦功率下, 基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG和Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的输出脉冲光谱。(a) 7 W; (b) 14 W; (c) 17 W

Fig. 6 Output pulse spectra of passively Q-switched laser based on Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG and Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG composite crystals under different pump powers. (a) 7 W; (b) 14 W; (c) 17 W

使用光束质量分析仪测量了基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG和Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器输出脉冲的 M^2 。图7为最大泵浦功率(17W)、1:2准直-聚焦比例下, 基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG和Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的光束直径与传播距离的关系, D_x 与 D_y 分别代表在x和y方向上的实验测量值。通过计算可以得到, 基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的输出激光在x和y方向上的 M^2 分别为1.21和1.22。基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的输出激光在x和y方向上的 M^2 分别为1.29和1.39。基于Yb:YAG/

YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器输出激光的 M^2 较大的原因是: 在17 W泵浦功率下, 基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的平均输出功率较高, 腔内热效应较严重。

同时, 测量并记录了基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG和Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的输出激光在相同平均输出功率下的 M^2 。从图8(a)中可以看出, 在1:2准直-聚焦比例情况下, 基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG的复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的输出激光的 M^2 从1.04增加到1.34, 基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG的复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的输出激光的

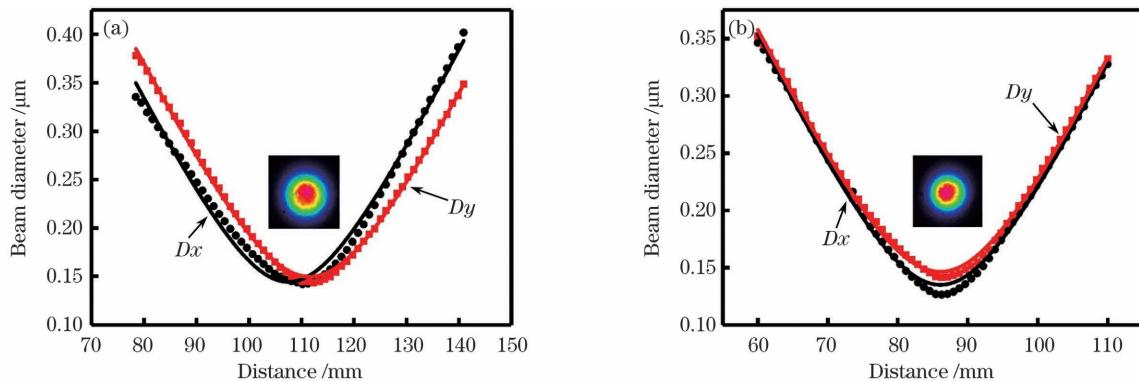


图7 不同复合晶体下,光束直径与传播距离的关系(点为实验数据,实线为拟合曲线),插图为近场光斑。(a)Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG;(b)Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG

Fig. 7 Relationship between beam diameter and propagation distance under different composite crystal (point is experimental data, and solid line is fitted curve), inserted figure is near-field spot. (a) Yb: YAG/Cr: YAG/YAG; (b) Yb: YAG/YAG/Cr: YAG/YAG

M^2 从1.07增加到1.22,出现该现象的原因是热效应随着输出功率的增加而增大。与基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG的情况相比,在相同的平均输出功率下,基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的输出激光的 M^2 更低,这是因为YAG层的加入使得晶体的散热性更好、热负

载更低。图8(b)为不同聚焦比例下,基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG的复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的输出激光在最大泵浦功率处的 M^2 。可以发现,随着聚焦比例的增大,泵浦光斑直径和激光模场均在增大,然而高功率下产生的高阶模,会导致 M^2 增加,造成激光横模变差^[36]。

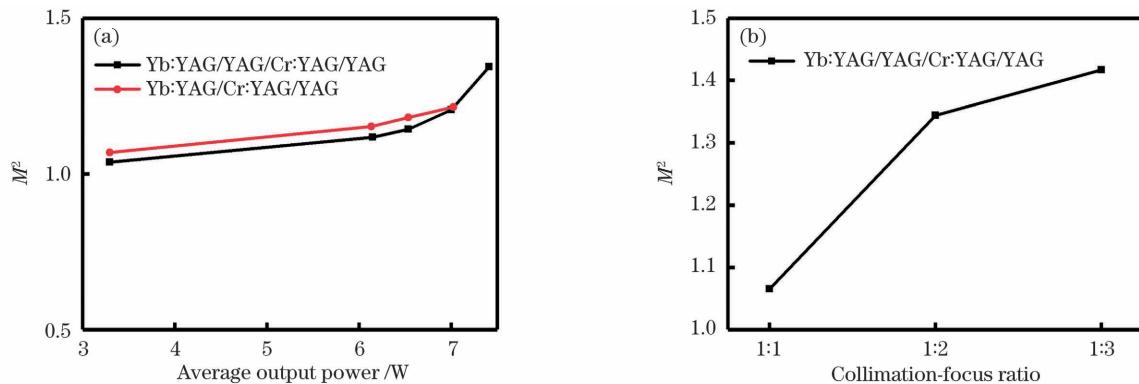


图8 M^2 与平均输出功率和准直-聚焦比例的关系。(a) M^2 与平均输出功率的关系;(b)基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的输出激光的 M^2 与准直-聚焦比例的关系

Fig. 8 Relationship among M^2 , average output power, and collimation-focus ratio. (a) Relationship between M^2 and average output power; (b) relationship between M^2 of output laser of passively Q-switched laser based on Yb: YAG/YAG/Cr: YAG/YAG composite crystal and collimation-focus ratio

4 结 论

采用端面泵浦的Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体实现了高效的被动调Q激光输出。由于复合晶体中间的YAG起到了散热与隔离作用,因此与基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的情况相比,基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器不仅具有更高的输出功率、单脉冲能量以及峰值功率,还具有很高的斜率效率、光-光效率和良好的光束质量。通过优化

OC透过率和非球面透镜组的准直-聚焦比例(泵浦光斑大小),在泵浦功率为17 W时,基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的平均输出功率为7.41 W、重复频率为25.5 kHz、脉冲宽度为4.6 ns、脉冲能量为290.6 μJ 、峰值功率为63.2 kW、斜率效率为57.0%、光-光效率为43.6%。与基于Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG的情况相比,基于Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG复合晶体的被动调Q激光器的平均输出功率、脉冲能量和脉冲峰值功率分别提升了5.6%、14.7%和22.2%,

并且在相同的输出功率条件下,其 M^2 更低。实验结果表明,基于 Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG 复合晶体的被动 Q 激光器具有更优的输出参数。

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Highly Efficient Passively Q-switched Laser Based on Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG Composite Crystal

Li Yongzhi^{1,2}, Zhang Meng^{1,2}, Yan Dongyu^{1,2}, Zhu Guang³, Chu Yuxi^{1,2*}, Hu Minglie^{1,2}

¹ Ultrafast Laser Laboratory, School of Precision Instrument and Opto-Electronics Engineering, Tianjin University, Tianjin 300072, China;

² Key Laboratory of Opto-Electronic Information Technology, Ministry of Education, School of Precision Instrument and Opto-Electronics Engineering, Tianjin University, Tianjin 300072, China;

³ Guoke Century Laser Technology (Tianjin) Co., Ltd., Tianjin 300072, China

Abstract

Objective Passively Q-switched laser is widely used in laser ignition, laser processing, nonlinear frequency conversion, and other fields owing to its short pulse width, high peak power, and miniaturization. A composite crystal can further shorten the length of the cavity to compress the pulse width, reduce the loss, eliminate the air gap, and avoid the damage to crystal surface coating caused by air-break. Although the heat can be dissipated via the end face YAG, strong thermal effect remains inside the Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG composite crystal. With the increase in temperature, the number of particles in the lower level of Yb:YAG increases, augmenting the self-absorption effect of Yb:YAG at wavelength of 1030 nm, resulting in its low efficiency. In addition, Yb, Cr:YAG dielectric layer, which has detrimental effect on the laser output performance, will be formed in the center of the composite crystal owing to the preparation technology. The present study proposes a four-layer-bonded composite crystal, Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG. Among these layers, the outermost one, YAG, plays the role of cooler. YAG as the intermediate layer can dissipate heat and reduce the thermal effect, thus reducing the self-absorption effect of Yb:YAG, as well as avoid the dielectric layer produced between Yb:YAG and Cr:YAG. Experimentally, the good output parameters can be obtained by the Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG composite crystal.

Methods In the present study, passively Q-switched lasers based on Yb:YAG/YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG and Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG composite crystals are studied. First, the optimal transmittance of output coupler (OC) is selected to achieve the highest output power. Then, the effect of pump beam radius on the output power is investigated using different collimation-focus ratios. Thereafter, the relationship among pump power of the two types of passively Q-switched lasers, repetition frequency, pulse width, single pulse energy, peak power, and spectrum are studied by optimizing the OC and pump spot. Furthermore, the quality factors (M^2) of the laser beams with the two kinds of crystals are measured.

Results and Discussions The optimal transmittance of OC for passively Q-switched lasers based on Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG and Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG composite crystals is 50%, and the output power increases approximately linearly with the increase of pump power. Passively Q-switched laser based on Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG composite crystal acquires a higher output power of 7.41 W and the slope efficiency of 57% (Fig. 2). When using 1:2 collimation-focus ratio (diameter of pump spot is 210 μm), the maximum output power is achieved and the output power of passively Q-switched laser based on Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG composite crystal increases more rapidly as the diameter of pump spot increases as compared with that of passively Q-switched laser based on Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG composite crystal (Fig. 3). At the maximum pump power (17 W), the repetition rate, pulse width, single pulse energy, and peak power of passively Q-switched laser based on Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG composite crystal are 25.5 kHz, 4.6 ns, 290.6 μJ , and 63.2 kW, respectively. Overall, compared with passively Q-switched laser based on Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG composite crystal, passively Q-switched laser based on Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG composite crystal has the lower repetition rate and pulse width, higher single pulse energy and peak power (Fig. 4), and better beam quality at the same output power (Fig. 8).

Conclusions We experimentally demonstrate a highly efficient passively Q-switched laser with Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG composite crystal pumped by a LD with a wavelength of 940 nm. The output performances are investigated based on Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG and Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG composite crystals with different transmittances of OC and diameters of pump spot. Based on the Yb:YAG/Cr:YAG/YAG composite crystal, the maximum average

output power of 7.41 W is obtained at the pump power of 17 W. The slope efficiency is 57.0%, while the optical-to-optical efficiency is 43.6%. The laser pulse has a pulse width of 4.6 ns, a repetition rate of 25.5 kHz, pulse energy of 290.6 μ J, and peak power of 63.2 kW. Compared with the passively Q-switched laser based on Yb: YAG/Cr: YAG/YAG composite crystal, Output power, pulse energy, and peak power of passively Q-switched laser based on Yb: YAG/YAG/Cr: YAG/YAG composite crystal are raised by 5.6%, 14.7%, and 22.2%, respectively. In the meantime, the M^2 factors of passively Q-switched lasers based on two kinds of composite crystals at the same output power are investigated, the passively Q-switched laser based on Yb: YAG/YAG/Cr: YAG/YAG composite crystal has a lower M^2 factor when producing the same amount of power. By comparing the experimental results, passively Q-switched laser based on Yb: YAG/YAG/Cr: YAG/YAG composite crystal can achieve better laser output parameters.

Key words lasers; ytterbium-doped laser; diode pumping; passively Q-switched laser; solid-state laser

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