

GSA 和 ESA 双波长泵浦 2.3 μm 波段 Tm:YAP 激光器

王飞, 黄海涛*, 鲍玉朔, 李子涵, 沈德元

江苏师范大学物理与电子工程学院, 江苏 徐州 221116

摘要 Tm³⁺ 离子³F₄ 能级的粒子数捕获效应是影响 2.3 μm 掺铥激光器高效运转的重要因素。报道了基态吸收(GSA, ³H₆→³H₄)和激发态吸收(ESA, ³F₄→³H₄)双波长泵浦 2.3 μm 波段 Tm:YAP 激光器。使用 785 nm(GSA)和 1470 nm(ESA)双波长泵浦方案能够精准减少³F₄ 能级的粒子数,有效增加³H₄ 能级粒子数布居。在双波长泵浦沿 α 轴切割的 Tm:YAP 晶体中,使用透过率 $T=1.5\%$ 的输出镜,2274 nm 和 2383 nm 双波长激光最大输出功率为 2.28 W,相比于单波长泵浦方案提高了 65.2%。使用 $T=2.8\%$ 输出镜,2383 nm 激光的最大输出功率为 942 mW,较单波长泵浦方案提高了 84.3%。通过采用特殊镀膜的输出镜,进一步实现了 2446 nm 激光运转,最大输出功率为 1.62 W,较单波长泵浦下的激光输出功率提高了 48.6%。实验结果表明,GSA 和 ESA 双波长泵浦方案为实现 2.3 μm 掺铥激光器获得更高的输出功率提供了一种有效技术手段。

关键词 激光器; 2.3 μm 掺铥激光器; 基态吸收; 激发态吸收; 双波长泵浦; Tm:YAP

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1 引言

2~3 μm 波段中红外激光器是当今国际激光研究与应用的热点研究方向。目前针对掺 Tm³⁺ 激光的研究工作主要集中在³F₄→³H₆ 跃迁过程,其发射波长为 1.8~2.1 μm (取决于基质材料)^[1-8]。Tm³⁺ 离子能级结构丰富,潜在激光跃迁过程多样^[9],在常规激光波段以外探索激活离子潜在的激光跃迁过程则是直接获得新波段中红外激光的重要手段,其中 Tm³⁺ 离子 2.3 μm 波段的³H₄→³H₅ 跃迁过程格外引人注目。近年来,国际上陆续有不同的研究组报道了 2.3 μm 激光的连续和脉冲运转特性,为 2.3 μm 掺 Tm³⁺ 固体激光的发展注入了新活力^[9-20]。

基于掺 Tm³⁺ 激光介质实现 2.3 μm 激光运转具有如下优势:Tm³⁺ 在 800 nm 左右有较强的吸收特性(直接对应³H₆→³H₄ 跃迁),与目前成熟的商品化 AlGaAs 半导体激光器(LD)的发射波长匹配,

可实现高性价比、半导体激光器抽运全固态 2.3 μm 波段激光运转^[16-20];同时³H₄→³H₅ 跃迁为四能级运转,无再吸收,温度效应弱,可实现室温运转;2.3 μm 波段还处于水的弱吸收区,激光运转时受周围空气湿度的影响小。另外,相对于掺 Cr²⁺ 的 II-IV 族介质,掺 Tm³⁺ 激光材料的制备工艺更加成熟可靠,基质种类更加丰富(如 Tm:YAG、Tm:YAP、Tm:YLF 等),为寻找光谱特性优良、热导率高、光学透过率高且物化性能稳定的掺 Tm³⁺ 激光介质提供了更多可能。

Tm³⁺ 离子³F₄ 能级的粒子数捕获效应是实现 2.3 μm 激光高效运转的关键。Tm³⁺ 离子之间存在较强的交叉弛豫过程(³H₄+³H₆→³F₄+³F₄),加上³F₄ 能级寿命很长,导致³F₄ 能级粒子大量积聚,从而直接造成³H₄ 能级粒子数减少,因此需要探索有效降低³F₄ 能级粒子数布居的方法。本课题组提出了 GSA 和 ESA 双波长泵浦 2.3 μm 掺 Tm³⁺ 激光器的方案,基态吸收(GSA)对应掺 Tm³⁺ 激光介质

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通信作者: *hht840211@163.com

的 ${}^3\text{H}_6 \rightarrow {}^3\text{H}_4$ 跃迁,激发态吸收(ESA)对应于掺 Tm^{3+} 激光介质的 ${}^3\text{F}_4 \rightarrow {}^3\text{H}_4$ 跃迁,其波长在 $1.45\ \mu\text{m}$ 附近。通过GSA泵浦将掺 Tm^{3+} 激光介质中 Tm^{3+} 离子抽运到 ${}^3\text{H}_4$ 能级,实现该能级粒子数的第一次布居。进一步通过ESA泵浦,将 ${}^3\text{F}_4$ 能级上积聚的粒子数精准抽运至 ${}^3\text{H}_4$ 能级,实现 ${}^3\text{H}_4$ 能级粒子数的再次增加。本课题组将 $785\ \text{nm}$ (GSA)、 $1470\ \text{nm}$ (ESA)双波长泵浦方案应用于 $\text{Tm}:\text{YLF}$ 晶体,实现了功率为 $1.8\ \text{W}$ 、波长为 $2.3\ \mu\text{m}$ 的连续激光输出,相对于 $0.8\ \mu\text{m}$ 单波长泵浦,输出功率提高了 60% ^[17]。

$\text{Tm}:\text{YAP}$ 晶体是实现 $2.3\ \mu\text{m}$ 波段激光输出的重要晶体之一。从基质角度看, YAP 晶体拥有高的热导率($11\ \text{W}\cdot\text{m}^{-1}\cdot\text{K}^{-1}$)和低的声子能量($552\ \text{cm}^{-1}$),有利于高功率激光输出^[18]。 $\text{Tm}:\text{YAP}$ 晶体结构的各向异性使其吸收光谱与发射光谱也呈现各向异性的特点^[18]。从吸收光谱看, $\text{Tm}:\text{YAP}$ 晶体 ${}^3\text{H}_6 \rightarrow {}^3\text{H}_4$ 跃迁的吸收光谱覆盖 $770\sim 810\ \text{nm}$ 波段,适合采用高功率 AlGaAs 半导体激光器作为泵浦源。从发射光谱看, $\text{Tm}:\text{YAP}$ ${}^3\text{H}_4 \rightarrow {}^3\text{H}_5$ 跃迁的荧光发射谱可以覆盖 $2.25\sim 2.5\ \mu\text{m}$ 波段,其在 $2278\ \text{nm}$ 处的受激发射截面为 $7.8\times 10^{-21}\ \text{cm}^2$,高于 $\text{Tm}:\text{YAG}$ 和 $\text{Tm}:\text{YLF}$ 晶体相应跃迁的受激发射截面($\text{Tm}:\text{YAG}:3.5\times 10^{-21}\ \text{cm}^2@2324\ \text{nm}$; $\text{Tm}:\text{YLF}:5.7\times 10^{-21}\ \text{cm}^2@2305\ \text{nm}$)。因此,相比于 $\text{Tm}:\text{YLF}$ 和 $\text{Tm}:\text{YAG}$ 介质, $\text{Tm}:\text{YAP}$ 在 ${}^3\text{H}_4 \rightarrow {}^3\text{H}_5$ 激光跃迁过程中具有更高的激光输出功率和斜率效率^[19]。另外,利用 $\text{Tm}:\text{YAP}$ 的宽荧光光谱特性还可以构建 AlGaAs 半导体激光器泵浦 $2.5\ \mu\text{m}$ 掺 Tm^{3+} 激光器^[20]。与基于 $\text{Cr}:\text{ZnSe}$ 、 $\text{Cr}:\text{ZnS}$ 等获得 $2.5\ \mu\text{m}$ 激光输出的方案相比, $\text{Tm}:\text{YAP}$ 晶体在泵浦源和激光介质两方面具有优势。

本文进一步报道了GSA和ESA双波长泵浦 $\text{Tm}:\text{YAP}$ $2.3\ \mu\text{m}$ 波段激光输出特性。在 $785\ \text{nm}$ 、 $1470\ \text{nm}$ 双波长半导体激光器泵浦下,使用透过率(T)为 1.5% 的输出镜, ${}^3\text{H}_4 \rightarrow {}^3\text{H}_5$ 跃迁的最大输出功率为 $2.28\ \text{W}$,相应的输出波长分别为 $2274\ \text{nm}$ 和 $2383\ \text{nm}$ 。相较于 $785\ \text{nm}$ 单波长泵浦,所提双波长泵浦的激光输出功率提高了 65.2% 。使用 $T=2.8\%$ 输出镜, $2383\ \text{nm}$ 单波长激光的最大输出功率为 $942\ \text{mW}$,较单波长泵浦方案的输出功率提高了 84.3% 。使用特殊镀膜的输出镜($T=0.5\%$)时,

$2446\ \text{nm}$ 激光的最大输出功率为 $1.62\ \text{W}$,激光输出功率较单波长泵浦方案提高了 48.6% 。实验结果表明,GSA和ESA双波长泵浦是实现 $2.3\ \mu\text{m}$ 波段掺 Tm^{3+} 激光器高功率输出的有效技术手段,并基于 $\text{Tm}:\text{YAP}$ 晶体有效拓展了掺 Tm^{3+} 激光器的输出波长。

2 实验装置

GSA和ESA双波长泵浦能级方案如图1(a)所示,双波长泵浦 $\text{Tm}:\text{YAP}$ 激光器实验装置如图1(b)所示。根据文献^[18]报道的 $\text{Tm}:\text{YAP}$ 基态吸收光谱和激发态吸收光谱, ${}^3\text{H}_6 \rightarrow {}^3\text{H}_4$ 跃迁对应的吸收带位于 $770\sim 810\ \text{nm}$, ${}^3\text{F}_4 \rightarrow {}^3\text{H}_4$ 跃迁对应的吸收带位于 $1430\sim 1500\ \text{nm}$ 。因此,GSA与ESA泵浦源分别选择商业化的 $785\ \text{nm}$ 和 $1470\ \text{nm}$ 半导体激光器。 $785\ \text{nm}$ 半导体激光器耦合输出光纤的芯径为 $400\ \mu\text{m}$,数值孔径为 0.22 ; $1470\ \text{nm}$ 激光器耦合输出光纤芯径为 $200\ \mu\text{m}$,数值孔径为 0.11 。激光谐振腔由输入镜(IM)和输出镜(OC)组成。IM为平凹镜,曲率半径为 $300\ \text{mm}$,指向谐振腔外的一面镀有 $785\ \text{nm}$ 减反膜,指向谐振腔内的一面镀有 $785\ \text{nm}$ 高透膜和 $2250\sim 2500\ \text{nm}$ 高反膜($R>99.8\%$)。平凹输出镜有三种镀膜规格。OC1对 $2250\sim 2400\ \text{nm}$ 激光的透过率为 1.5% ,OC2对 $2250\sim 2400\ \text{nm}$ 激光的透过率为 2.8% 。以上两种输出镜用于实现 $\text{Tm}:\text{YAP}$ 晶体 $2.3\ \mu\text{m}$ 波段激光振荡。OC3对 $2200\sim 2350\ \text{nm}$ 激光高透,对 $2400\sim 2500\ \text{nm}$ 激光的透过率为 0.5% ,用于实现 $2.5\ \mu\text{m}$ 波段激光振荡。 $785\ \text{nm}$ 和 $1470\ \text{nm}$ 泵浦光通过 $1:1$ 耦合聚焦系统分别从激光腔的左、右两侧耦合到 $\text{Tm}:\text{YAP}$ 激光晶体中。通过调节耦合聚焦系统使 $785\ \text{nm}$ 和 $1470\ \text{nm}$ 泵浦光的束腰位置重合,并与晶体端面的距离约为 $4\ \text{mm}$,两种泵浦光束在晶体内的瑞利长度均为 $1.8\ \text{mm}$ 。分束器(BS)对 $1400\sim 1500\ \text{nm}$ 激光高透,同时对 $2250\sim 2500\ \text{nm}$ 激光高反,用于实现 $1470\ \text{nm}$ 泵浦光与 $2.3\sim 2.5\ \mu\text{m}$ 波段激光的分束。激光介质采用的是沿 a 轴切割的 $\text{Tm}:\text{YAP}$ 晶体,掺杂浓度(原子数分数)为 2% ,尺寸为 $4\ \text{mm}\times 4\ \text{mm}\times 8\ \text{mm}$,两个端面分别镀有 $780\sim 810\ \text{nm}$ 及 $2250\sim 2500\ \text{nm}$ 减反膜。激光晶体用铝箔包裹,并安装在一个用 $15\ ^\circ\text{C}$ 水冷却的铜块中,水冷温控精度为 $0.1\ ^\circ\text{C}$ 。

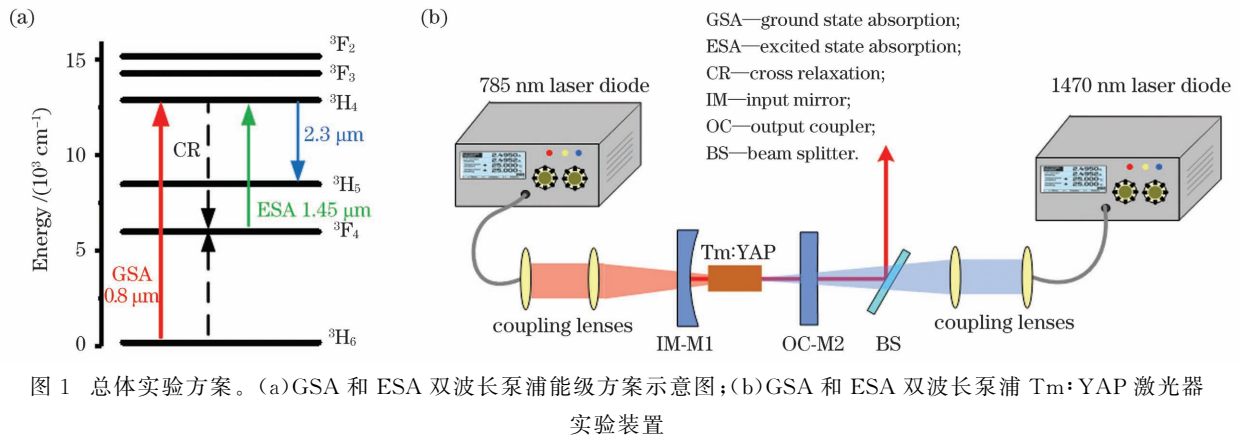


图 1 总体实验方案。(a)GSA 和 ESA 双波长泵浦能级方案示意图;(b)GSA 和 ESA 双波长泵浦 Tm:YAP 激光器实验装置

Fig. 1 Overall experimental scheme. (a) Energy level diagram of GSA and ESA dual-wavelength pumped scheme; (b) experimental arrangement for GSA and ESA dual-wavelength pumped Tm:YAP laser

3 实验结果与分析

图 2 所示为 Tm:YAP 晶体在非激光振荡条件下对 785 nm 和 1470 nm 泵浦光的吸收率变化曲线。在 785 nm 泵浦光作用下, Tm:YAP 晶体的吸收率从 42.4% 下降到 30.7%。在 1470 nm 泵浦光作用下, Tm:YAP 晶体的吸收率从 17.8% 下降到 8.1%。

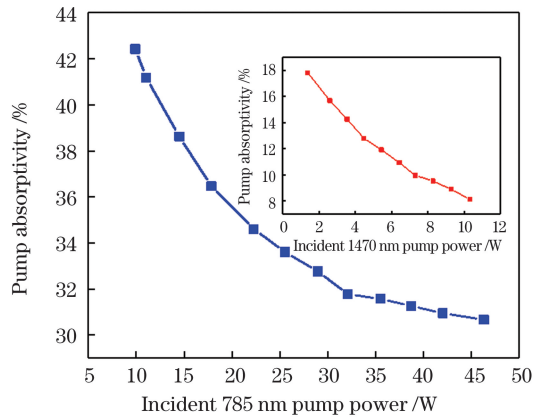


图 2 Tm:YAP 晶体对 785 nm 和 1470 nm 泵浦光的吸收率随泵浦功率的变化曲线

Fig. 2 Curves of Tm:YAP crystal absorptivity of 785 nm and 1470 nm pump light with pump powers

研究了 785 nm 单波长泵浦 Tm:YAP 激光输出特性。使用光谱仪(Yokogawa, AQ6376)测量激光光谱,结果如图 3 所示,其中 SWP 表示单波长泵浦,DWP 表示双波长泵浦。使用 OC1($T=1.5%$)输出镜,Tm:YAP 激光器的输出波长为 2274 nm 和 2383 nm,输出功率曲线如图 4 所示。两个波长下激光器具有几乎相同的振荡阈值,并且 2274 nm 和 2383 nm 双波长激光输出功率随着 785 nm 泵浦光功率的增加而增大。在最大入射泵浦功率下,获得

最大输出功率为 1.38 W 的激光输出,斜率效率为 6.9%。使用 OC2($T=2.8%$)输出镜时,最大输出功率为 511 mW,输出波长为 2383 nm。对于 OC3($T=0.5%$),2446 nm 激光的最大输出功率为

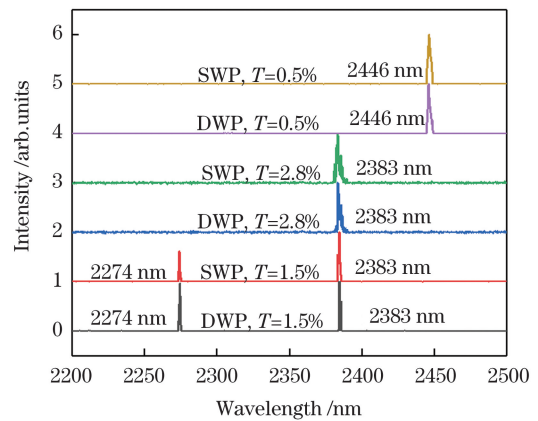


图 3 在最大输出功率下测量得到的激光输出光谱
Fig. 3 Typical laser emission spectra measured at maximum output power

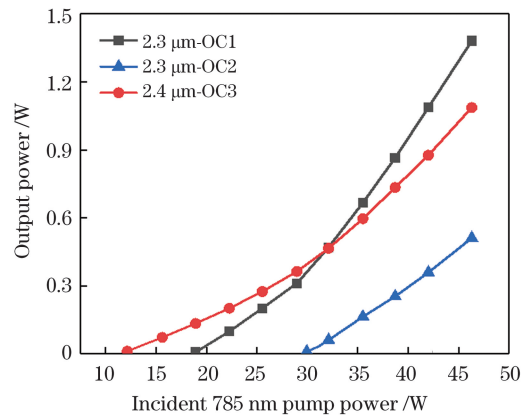


图 4 2.3~2.5 μm 激光输出功率随 785 nm 入射泵浦功率的变化曲线

Fig. 4 Curves of 2.3~2.5 μm laser output powers with incident 785 nm pump powers

1.09 W, 斜率效率为 4.3%。

接下来通过 1:1 耦合聚焦系统, 将光斑直径为 200 μm 的 1470 nm 泵浦光耦合到 $\text{Tm}:\text{YAP}$ 中, 构成 GSA 和 ESA 双波长泵浦结构。为了探究 ESA 泵浦过程对 2.3 μm 激光输出性能的影响, 首先研究在给定 785 nm 入射泵浦功率下, 2.3 ~ 2.5 μm 激光输出功率与 1470 nm 入射泵浦功率的关系, 实验结果如图 5 所示。很显然, 引入 1470 nm ESA 泵浦过程后, 2.3 ~ 2.5 μm 激光输出功率显著增加, 这表明 ESA 过程有效增加了 $^3\text{H}_4$ 能级粒子数。需要注意的是, 在 1470 nm 单波长泵浦下, 无法实现 2.3 ~ 2.5 μm 的激光输出。在最大给定 785 nm 泵浦功率和最大入射 1470 nm

泵浦功率下, 使用 $\text{OC1}(T=1.5\%)$ 时, 2274 nm 和 2383 nm 双波长的最大输出功率为 2.28 W, 相比于 785 nm 单波长泵浦, 激光输出功率提高了 65.2%。使用 $\text{OC2}(T=2.8\%)$ 时, 最大输出功率为 915 mW, 较单波长泵浦方案的输出功率提高了 79.1%。使用 $\text{OC3}(T=0.5\%)$ 时, 2446 nm 激光的最大输出功率为 1.62 W, 激光输出功率提高了 48.6%。

进一步测量了双波长泵浦下激光器在最大输出功率下的稳定性。对于 $\text{OC1}(T=1.5\%)$ 、 $\text{OC2}(T=2.8\%)$ 和 $\text{OC3}(T=0.5\%)$ 三个输出镜, 30 min 内输出功率的不稳定性分别为 1.13%、1.16% 和 1.77%。

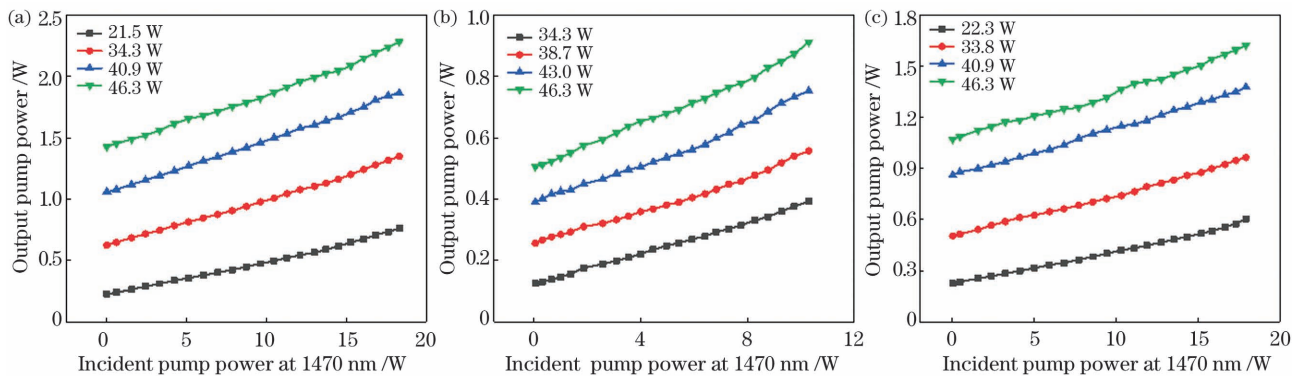


图 5 不同的给定 785 nm 入射泵浦功率下, 2.3 ~ 2.5 μm 激光输出功率随 1470 nm 入射泵浦功率的变化曲线。

(a) $\text{OC1}(T=1.5\%)$; (b) $\text{OC2}(T=2.8\%)$; (c) $\text{OC3}(T=0.5\%)$

Fig. 5 Curves of 2.3–2.5 μm laser output powers with incident 1470 nm pump powers under different given incident 785 nm pump powers. (a) $\text{OC1}(T=1.5\%)$; (b) $\text{OC2}(T=2.8\%)$; (c) $\text{OC3}(T=0.5\%)$

从图 5 可以看出, 随着 1470 nm 入射泵浦功率的增加, 聚集在 Tm^{3+} 离子亚稳态 $^3\text{F}_4$ 能级的离子被迅速激发到激光上能级 $^3\text{H}_4$, 由于粒子的填充, 2.3 ~ 2.5 μm 激光输出功率迅速增大, 并没有出现 ESA 过

程将 $^3\text{F}_4$ 能级粒子抽运而产生的功率饱和现象。该结果表明通过增加 GSA、ESA 泵浦源功率, 有望进一步提升 $\text{Tm}:\text{YAP}$ 晶体 2.3 μm 波段的输出功率。

图 6 所示为在不同的给定 1470 nm 入射泵浦

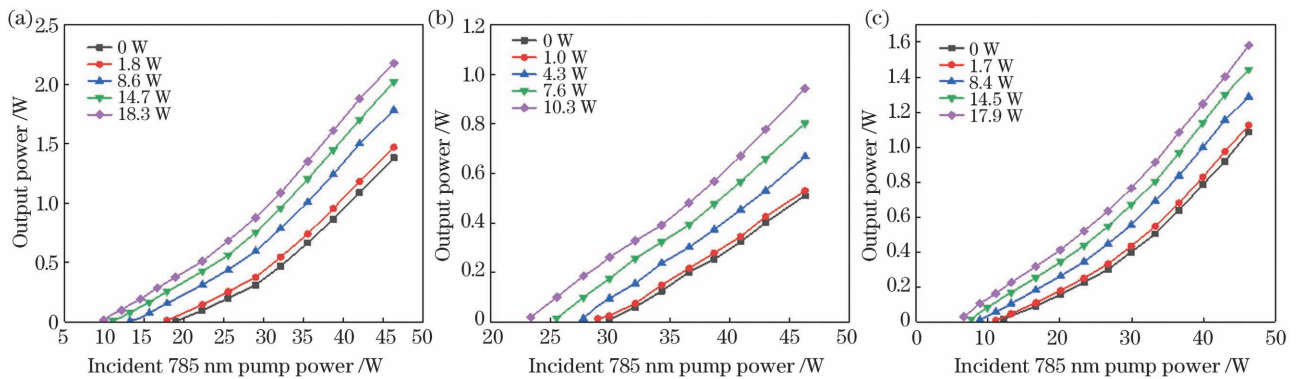


图 6 不同的给定 1470 nm 入射泵浦功率下, 2.3 ~ 2.5 μm 激光输出功率随 785 nm 入射泵浦功率的变化曲线。

(a) $\text{OC1}(T=1.5\%)$; (b) $\text{OC2}(T=2.8\%)$; (c) $\text{OC3}(T=0.5\%)$

Fig. 6 Curves of 2.3–2.5 μm laser output powers with incident 785 nm pump power under different given incident 1470 nm pump powers. (a) $\text{OC1}(T=1.5\%)$; (b) $\text{OC2}(T=2.8\%)$; (c) $\text{OC3}(T=0.5\%)$

功率的情况下, $2.3 \sim 2.5 \mu\text{m}$ 激光输出功率与 785 nm 入射泵浦功率的变化关系。可以看出, 引入的 ESA 泵浦过程并没有改变输出功率随 785 nm 泵浦功率单调增加的趋势。当引入 1470 nm 泵浦光后, OC1 ($T = 1.5\%$)、OC2 ($T = 2.8\%$) 和 OC3 ($T = 0.5\%$) 对应的激光振荡阈值分别从 18.9 W 降到 9.9 W 、从 29.9 W 降到 23.4 W , 以及从 12.1 W 降到 6.6 W 。该结果表明引入 ${}^3\text{F}_4 \rightarrow {}^3\text{H}_4$ ESA 泵浦可以建立 Tm^{3+} 离子精准转移通道, 有效减少 ${}^3\text{F}_4$ 能级的无效粒子数布居。使用 OC1 ($T = 1.5\%$) 时获得的最大输出功率为 2.17 W , 相比于 785 nm 单波长泵浦下激光输出功率提高了 57.2% 。使用 OC2 ($T = 2.8\%$) 时, 2383 nm 激光的最大输出功率为 942 mW , 较单波长泵浦方案的输出功率提高了 84.3% 。使用 OC3 ($T = 0.5\%$) 时 2446 nm 激光的

最大输出功率为 1.58 W , 较单波长泵浦方案的输出功率提高了 45% 。综上, 在给定 1470 nm 入射泵浦功率的情况下, 激光输出功率也没有出现饱和现象。

图 7(a) 所示为在 GSA 和 ESA 双波长泵浦情况下, 最大激光输出功率随激光晶体冷却温度的变化曲线。可以看到, 激光器输出功率基本不受激光晶体冷却温度变化的影响, 表明由 GSA、ESA 跃迁过程建立的激光上能级粒子数布居机制具有较高的温度不敏感性。图 7(b) 所示为激光器输出功率随谐振腔长度的变化曲线, 谐振腔的最佳长度为 22 mm , 进一步增加谐振腔长度会导致输出功率下降, 这与晶体的热透镜效应有关, 后续采用 YAP/YAP:YAP 键合晶体方案有望降低热效应的影响。

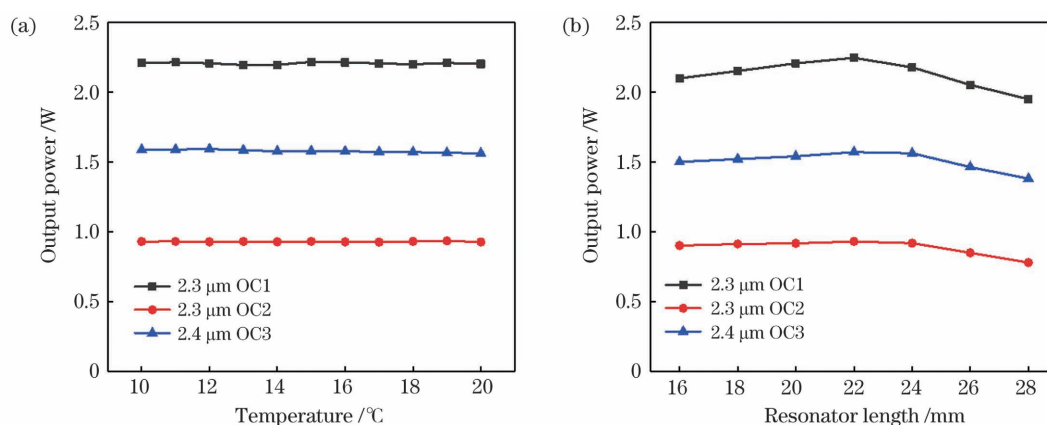


图 7 输出功率随相关参数的变化曲线。(a) 输出功率随激光晶体冷却温度的变化曲线; (b) 输出功率随谐振腔长度的变化曲线
Fig. 7 Dependence of output powers on related parameters. (a) Dependence of output powers on the cooling temperature of laser crystal; (b) dependence of output powers on the length of resonator

图 8 所示为利用 NanoScan 光束质量分析仪测得的最大输出功率下的光斑强度分布。 2274 nm 和 2383 nm 双波长激光光束沿 A_1 和 A_2 方向的 M^2 因子分别为 1.28 和 1.58 。 2383 nm 激光光束沿 A_1 和 A_2 方向的 M^2 因子分别为 1.60 和 1.78 。 2446 nm 激光光束沿 A_1 和 A_2 方向的 M^2 因子分别为 1.70 和 1.68 。

4 结 论

报道了 GSA 和 ESA 双波长 $2.3 \mu\text{m}$ 波段 $\text{Tm}:\text{YAP}$ 激光器, 使用 785 nm 和 1470 nm 泵浦激光构成了 GSA 和 ESA 双波长泵浦结构, 对 ${}^3\text{H}_4$ 能级实现了粒子数的二次布居。当引入 1470 nm 泵浦光时, ${}^3\text{H}_4 \rightarrow {}^3\text{H}_5$ 跃迁激光的振荡阈值显著降低。 2274 nm 和 2383 nm 双波长泵浦的最大输出功率达

2.28 W , 相比于单波长 785 nm 泵浦, 激光输出功率提高了 65.2% 。 2383 nm 激光的最大输出功率为 942 mW , 较单波长泵浦方案提高了 84.3% 。 2446 nm 激光的最大输出功率达 1.62 W , 较单波长方案提高了 48.6% 。实验结果表明, 通过引入 ESA 泵浦过程可以精准地激发 ${}^3\text{F}_4$ 能级的粒子跃迁到 ${}^3\text{H}_4$ 能级上, 激光输出功率得到大幅提升。

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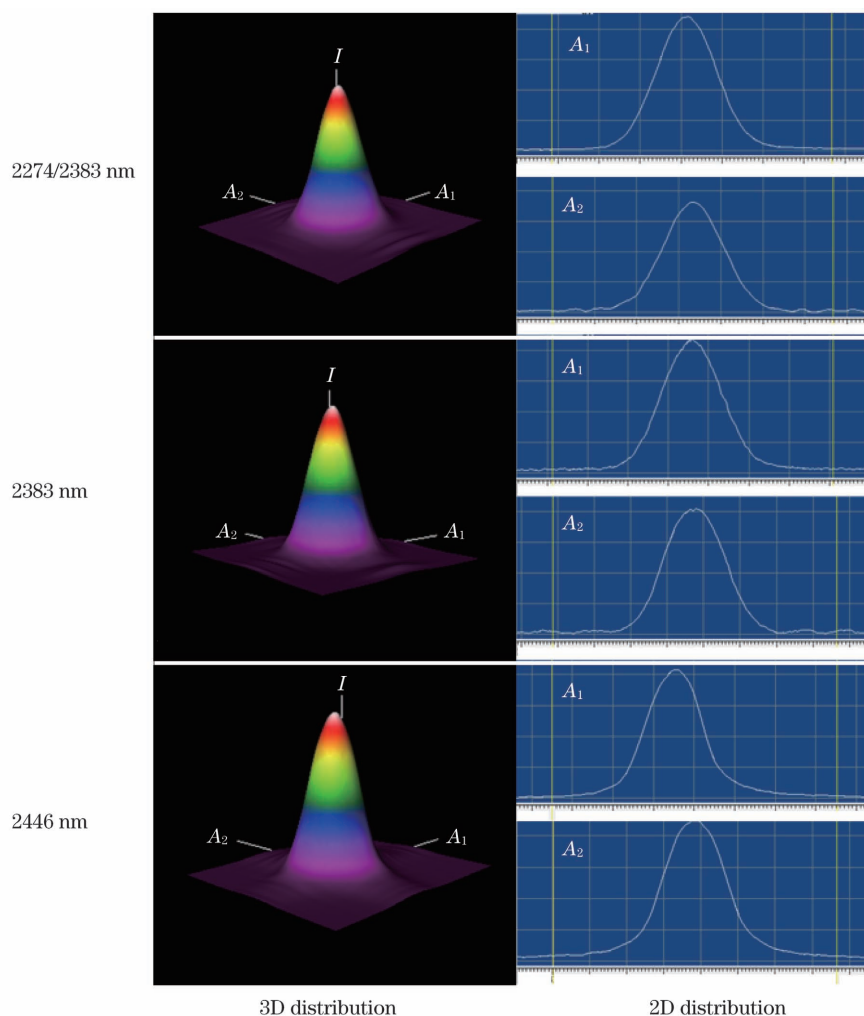


图 8 输出激光的光斑强度分布图

Fig. 8 Intensity distribution of output laser spot

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GSA and ESA Dual-Wavelength Pumped 2.3 μm $\text{Tm}:\text{YAP}$ Lasers

Wang Fei, Huang Haitao^{*}, Bao Yushuo, Li Zihan, Shen Deyuan

School of Physics and Electronic Engineering, Jiangsu Normal University, Xuzhou, Jiangsu 221116, China

Abstract

Objective Midinfrared lasers emitting in the 2–3 μm range are a popular research topic in laser science and applications. Presently, the majority Tm -doped laser research is focused on the ${}^3\text{F}_4 \rightarrow {}^3\text{H}_6$ transition, with the laser wavelength ranging from 1.8 to 2.1 μm . Tm^{3+} ions have multiple potential laser transition processes owing to their rich energy level structure. Exploring the potential laser transition process of activating ions outside of the conventional waveband is an important step toward directly obtaining a new midinfrared wavelength. The ${}^3\text{H}_4 \rightarrow {}^3\text{H}_5$ transition in Tm^{3+} ions at 2.3 μm has attracted considerable attention lately. The following are the advantages of achieving a 2.3 μm laser operation in a Tm -doped laser medium. Tm^{3+} ions absorb strongly at $\sim 800 \text{ nm}$, which is the emission wavelength of commercial AlGaAs laser diodes (LDs). Then, a low-cost LD-pumped all-solid-state 2.3 μm Tm -doped laser can be designed. Furthermore, the ${}^3\text{H}_4 \rightarrow {}^3\text{H}_5$ transition is a four-level structure that can support room temperature laser operation with a negligible reabsorption effect. The 2.3 μm region is in the weak absorption zone of water, and the laser operation is less affected by the surrounding air humidity. Compared with the scheme of using Cr^{2+} -doped II–IV media to realize 2.3 μm laser, the preparation of Tm -doped laser materials is more mature and reliable, and the types of the matrix are more abundant (such as $\text{Tm}:\text{YAG}$, $\text{Tm}:\text{YAP}$, $\text{Tm}:\text{YLF}$), which provides more possibilities for finding Tm -doped laser materials with excellent spectral characteristics, high thermal conductivity, high optical transmittance, and stable physicochemical properties. However, the population trapping effect of the ${}^3\text{F}_4$ level limits the power scaling of a 2.3 μm Tm -doped laser on the transition of ${}^3\text{H}_4 \rightarrow {}^3\text{H}_5$. On one hand, Tm^{3+} ions (${}^3\text{H}_4 + {}^3\text{H}_6 \rightarrow {}^3\text{F}_4 + {}^3\text{F}_4$) have a strong cross-relaxation process. On the other hand, the long lifetime of ${}^3\text{F}_4$ level will result in a large accumulation of Tm^{3+} ions at the ${}^3\text{F}_4$ level. This will reduce the population at the ${}^3\text{H}_4$ level which is essential for the 2.3 μm laser transition. Methods for effectively depopulating the ${}^3\text{F}_4$ level must be investigated.

Methods This paper validates the scheme of 785 and 1470 nm dual-wavelength pumped 2.3 μm Tm-doped laser. The pumping at 785 nm corresponds to the ground state absorption (GSA) of the $^3\text{H}_6 \rightarrow ^3\text{H}_4$ transition. The pumping at 1470 nm corresponds to the excited state absorption (ESA) of the $^3\text{F}_4 \rightarrow ^3\text{H}_4$ transition. Tm^{3+} ions are pumped to the $^3\text{H}_4$ level by the $^3\text{H}_6 \rightarrow ^3\text{H}_4$ transition to populate the upper laser level. The Tm^{3+} ions that have accumulated on the $^3\text{F}_4$ level are then accurately transferred to the $^3\text{H}_4$ level via the $^3\text{F}_4 \rightarrow ^3\text{H}_4$ transition. This effectively increases the Tm^{3+} ions at the $^3\text{H}_4$ level (Fig. 1). The laser medium used in the experiment is Tm:YAP crystal, which was chosen based on the following criteria. The YAP crystal has high thermal conductivity and low phonon energy from the perspective of the matrix, which is conducive to achieving high output power. Because of the anisotropy of the Tm:YAP crystal structure, the absorption, and emission spectrums are anisotropic. The $^3\text{H}_6 \rightarrow ^3\text{H}_4$ absorption spectrum of Tm:YAP crystal covers 770–810 nm waveband, which is suitable for using high-power AlGaAs LD as the pump source. The fluorescence emission spectrum of Tm:YAP for $^3\text{H}_4 \rightarrow ^3\text{H}_5$ transition can cover 2.25–2.5 μm , which can support multiple lasing wavelengths. The GSA pump source is a fiber-coupled, 785 nm LD with a core diameter of 400 μm and a numerical aperture of 0.22. The ESA pump source of 1470-nm LD has a core diameter of 200 μm and a numerical aperture of 0.11. The a -cut TmYAP crystal has a doping concentration (atomic number fraction) of 2% and a size of $4 \times 4 \times 8 \text{ mm}^3$. Its two light-passing faces are antireflective coated at 780–810 and 2250–2500 nm. The laser crystal is wrapped in indium foil and installed in a copper block cooled using water at 15 $^\circ\text{C}$.

Results and Discussions The effectiveness of using GSA and ESA dual-wavelength pumping to increase the output power of a 2.3 μm Tm-doped laser has been experimentally validated. In GSA and ESA dual-wavelength pumped a -cut TmYAP crystal, a maximum laser output power of 2.28 W is obtained with a $T = 1.5\%$ output coupler at dual-wavelengths of 2274 and 2383 nm, an increase of 65.2% compared with the case of single-wavelength pumping scheme (Fig. 5). With a $T = 2.8\%$ output coupler, 942 mW at 2383 nm laser is obtained, an increase of 84.3% compared with the case of the single-wavelength pumping scheme (Fig. 6). A specially coated output mirror with a high transmittance at 2200–2350 nm and transmittance of 0.5% at 2400–2500 is used to further realize the 2446 nm laser operation. The maximum output power is 1.62 W, an increase of 48.6% compared with the case of the single-wavelength pumping scheme (Fig. 5). Further, when 1470 nm pump light is introduced, the laser oscillation thresholds for incident 785 nm pump power are greatly reduced from 18.9 to 9.9 W, 29.9 to 23.4 W, and 12.1 to 6.6 W for OC1 ($T = 1.5\%$), OC2 ($T = 2.8\%$) and OC3 ($T = 0.5\%$), respectively (Fig. 6). These results indicate that 1470 nm ESA pumping can accurately depopulate the $^3\text{F}_4$ level while effectively increasing the populations at the $^3\text{H}_4$ level.

Conclusions The GSA and ESA dual-wavelength pumped Tm:YAP laser emitting in the 2.3 μm region have been realized successfully. The Tm:YAP crystal has a maximum output power of 2.28 W at 2.3 μm . To the best our knowledge, this is the highest CW output power obtained in a 2.3 μm Tm-doped solid-state laser. Making full use of the broadband emission spectrum of the $^3\text{H}_4 \rightarrow ^3\text{H}_5$ transition of the Tm:YAP crystal, a watt-level LD-pumped 2.5 μm Tm:YAP laser is achieved using the dual-wavelength pumping scheme. Our results show that GSA and ESA dual-wavelength pumping is an effective technical means to achieve a high power output of 2.3 μm Tm-doped laser.

Key words lasers; 2.3 μm thulium-doped lasers; ground state absorption; excited state absorption; dual-wavelength pumping; Tm:YAP