

激光二极管泵浦的瓦级主动调 Q 翠绿宝石激光器

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摘要 报道了连续红光激光二极管(LD)泵浦的主动调 Q 翠绿宝石激光器。利用 β 相偏硼酸钡晶体(BBO)制成的普克尔盒作为主动调 Q 开关,在 V 型腔中实现了平均功率为 1.16 W 的 755 nm 激光输出,对应的重复频率为 10 kHz,脉冲宽度为 961 ns,单脉冲能量为 116 μ J;通过在腔内插入双折射滤光片(BRF),实现了 728~793 nm 的波长调谐,并进一步研究了不同重复频率下的脉冲特性。此外,采用腔倒空技术,成功将脉冲宽度压窄至 10 ns,对应的中心波长为 767 nm,峰值功率超过 3 kW。

关键词 激光器;翠绿宝石激光器;红光激光二极管;主动调 Q;腔倒空;波长可调谐

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1 引言

700~800 nm 波长的激光位于可见光与近红外光的过渡区域,在非线性光学、遥感探测、光学干扰、激光医疗等方面有广泛应用^[1-6]。获取这一波段激光的主要途径有染料激光器、钛宝石激光器和翠绿宝石激光器等。其中,染料激光器发展最早,但其增益介质有毒,整体系统维护困难,进一步的应用受到限制。钛宝石激光器发展相对成熟,一般由绿光激光器泵浦;由于宽带增益特性,其多被应用于超快激光等领域^[7-9]。翠绿宝石晶体作为激光工作介质,其吸收谱线几乎覆盖可见光区域,可以使用闪光灯^[10]、激光(如 532 nm 绿光^[11]、589 nm 黄光^[12])、激光二极管(LD)^[13]、发光二极管(LED)^[14]等多种光源进行泵浦;综合考虑泵浦成本、功率及转换效率等因素,经济且高效的红光 LD 是目前翠绿宝石激光器的主要泵浦源。此外,翠绿宝石激光器可实现 701~858 nm 的波长可调谐输出^[15],且在一定温度范围内,晶体的增益随着温度的升高而增大^[16]。在物理性质方面,该晶体的热导率达到 23 W/(m·K)、损伤阈值为 270 J/cm²,适合在大功率泵浦下工作^[17];翠绿宝石晶体的上能级寿命达 262 μ s,有利于实现粒子数反转并获得高能量的脉冲

输出^[18]。因此,翠绿宝石激光器是一种获取 700~800 nm 这一特殊波段激光输出的理想选择。

脉冲翠绿宝石激光器在激光美容、激光雷达等方面的应用更为普遍,也是目前翠绿宝石激光器的一大研究热点。主动调 Q 是获得脉冲输出的常用方案之一。近年来,随着大功率红光 LD 的突破^[19-20],国际上对红光 LD 泵浦的主动调 Q 翠绿宝石激光器的研究进入了快速发展阶段。2014 年,英国伦敦帝国理工学院的 Teppitaksak 等^[13]利用脉冲红光 LD 泵浦翠绿宝石,以 β 相偏硼酸钡晶体(BBO)制成的普克尔盒作为调 Q 开关,获得了重复频率为 1 kHz、单脉冲能量为 0.74 mJ、脉宽为 92 ns、平均功率为 0.74 W 的激光输出;2016 年,英国伦敦帝国理工学院的 Thomas 等^[21]仍然利用脉冲红光 LD 泵浦翠绿宝石,将主动调 Q 激光的单脉冲能量提升至 3 mJ,对应的重复频率为 500 Hz,平均功率为 1.5 W,并利用腔倒空技术实现了 3 ns 的输出脉宽;此外,他们利用连续红光 LD 作为泵浦源,获得了重复频率为 10 kHz、单脉冲能量为 150 μ J、平均功率为 1.5 W 的输出,这是国外唯一的利用连续红光 LD 泵浦翠绿宝石晶体产生瓦级调 Q 输出的实验结果。2016 年,德国弗劳恩霍夫激光技术研究所的 Munk 等^[22]在环形

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腔中利用电光调 Q 技术实现了重复频率为 100 Hz、单脉冲能量为 6.2 mJ 的激光输出,基于此,Munk 等^[23]在 2018 年利用种子注入技术,实现了线宽约为

10 MHz 的单纵模调 Q 激光输出。表 1 列出了近年来红光 LD 泵浦的主动调 Q 翠绿宝石激光器的相关研究成果。

表 1 已报道的红光 LD 泵浦的主动调 Q 翠绿宝石激光器实验结果汇总

Table 1 Summary of reported results of red LD pumped actively Q-switched Alexandrite laser

Year	Country	Wavelength /nm	Repetition rate /kHz	Pulse duration /ns	Pulse energy /mJ	Output power /W	Ref.
2014	UK	-	1	92	0.74	0.74	[13]
2014	UK	-	0.1	58	0.7	0.07	[13]
2016	UK	758	-	3	0.510	-	[21]
2016	UK	759	10	-	0.15	1.5	[21]
2016	UK	753	0.5	70	3	1.5	[21]
2016	Germany	770	0.035	350	0.8	0.028	[22]
2016	Germany	770	0.1	-	6.2	0.620	[22]
2018	Germany	770	0.5	850	1.7	0.850	[23]
2018	Germany	769	0.15	420	1	0.150	[24]
2021	China	755	10	961	0.116	1.16	This work

国内对于红光 LD 泵浦的翠绿宝石激光器的研究尚处于起步阶段。2020 年,本课题组利用波长为 589 nm 的黄光激光器作为泵浦源,实现了功率为 2.51 W 的 755 nm 激光输出^[12];利用红光 LD 作为泵浦源,采用双端泵浦方案,实现了功率为 10.5 W 的 760 nm 连续光输出^[25]。同年,中国科学院理化技术研究所的 Song 等^[26]利用绿光激光器和红光 LD 作为泵浦源,分别实现了最大输出功率为 2.1 W 和 6.2 W 的激光输出;2021 年, Song 等^[27]利用红光 LD 作为泵浦源,采用腔内倍频方案,获得了平均功率为 2.55 W 的 378 nm 连续光输出。此外,2021 年,山东大学晶体材料研究所的 Miao 等^[28]利用红光 LD 泵浦,实现了重复频率高达 3.6 GHz 的自锁模翠绿宝石激光。到目前为止,国内尚未有机构报道关于红光 LD 泵浦的调 Q 翠绿宝石激光器。

本文介绍了本课题组基于主动调 Q 技术,利用红光 LD 泵浦翠绿宝石激光器的相关研究。基于国产翠绿宝石晶体,采用 BBO 普克尔盒作为调 Q 开关,在长度约为 33 cm 的折叠腔中实现了平均功率瓦量级的激光输出,达到 1.16 W,对应的重复频率为 10 kHz、脉冲宽度为 961 ns、单脉冲能量为 116 μJ;通过在腔内插入双折射滤光片(BRF),实现了 728~793 nm 的波长调谐,最大输出功率处的波长为 755 nm,并研究了在 5 kHz 与 10 kHz 两种重复频率下这一波长的输出激光的脉冲特性。此外,实验中利用腔倒空技术实现了脉宽压窄,获得的激光脉宽为 10 ns,单脉冲能量为 33.4 μJ,峰值功率超过 3 kW。

2 实验装置及结果讨论

图 1 所示为连续红光 LD 泵浦的电光调 Q 翠绿宝

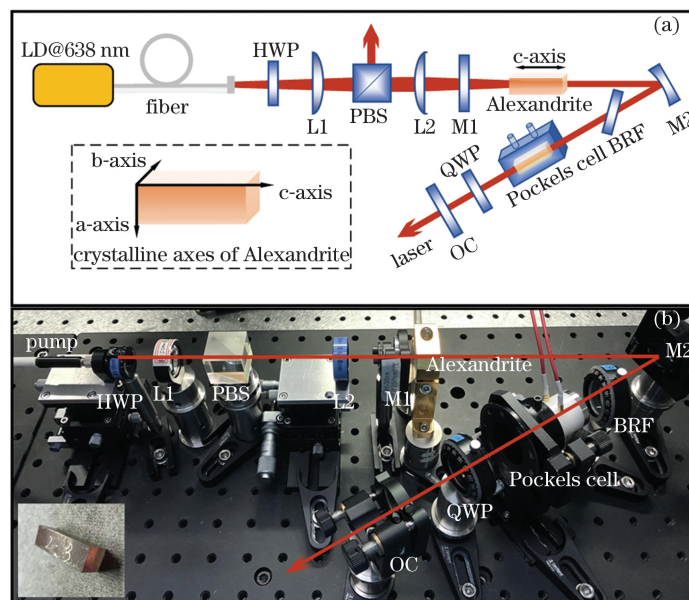


图 1 主动调 Q 翠绿宝石激光器。(a)实验装置示意图;(b)实验装置照片,插图为翠绿宝石晶体的照片

Fig. 1 Actively Q-switched Alexandrite laser. (a) Schematic of experimental setup; (b) photograph of experimental setup with photograph of Alexandrite crystal shown in inset

石激光器的实验装置示意图及实物照片,插图为实验中所用翠绿宝石晶体(青岛海泰光电技术有限公司生产)的实物照片。实验中采用 V 型谐振腔结构,整体腔长约为 33 cm。泵浦源是一个光纤耦合输出的红光 LD,其中心波长为 638 nm,最大输出功率约为 40 W,光纤纤芯直径为 400 μm ,数值孔径为 0.22。实验中使用的翠绿宝石晶体尺寸为 3 mm \times 3 mm \times 10 mm,其 Cr³⁺ 掺杂浓度(原子数分数)为 0.2%;晶体用厚度为 0.05 mm 的钢膜包裹并固定于热沉中,热沉水冷的温度设定为 20 $^{\circ}\text{C}$ 。半波片(HWP)用来调整泵浦光中各偏振分量的比例,偏振分光棱镜(PBS)用来滤过垂直偏振分量,最终获得最大功率为 25 W 的水平偏振泵浦光。翠绿宝石晶体具有偏振吸收特性,其对平行于 b 轴的偏振光的吸收率大于 97%,且输出激光仍可保持良好的偏振态。泵浦光经过由透镜 L1 和 L2 组

成的准直聚焦系统后注入翠绿宝石晶体中,两个透镜的焦距均为 50 mm。腔镜 M1 是平面镜,镀有 638 nm 的增透膜和 700~800 nm 的高反膜。M2 是曲率为 300 mm 的平凹镜,镀有 700~800 nm 的高反膜。BRF 用来实现波长调谐。BBO 普克尔盒和四分之一波片(QWP)共同控制腔内振荡激光的偏振态以实现脉冲输出。普克尔盒在 700~800 nm 处的四分之一波电压为 2300~3000 V。输出耦合镜(OC)的反射率为 99%。

实验中将厚度为 1, 2, 4 mm 的三片 BRF 组合片插入谐振腔,通过旋转组合片的光轴,实现波长可调谐的激光输出。图 2(a)所示分别为 5 kHz 与 10 kHz 重复频率下不同波长处的输出功率及对应的脉冲宽度。实验中获得了 728~793 nm 的波长可调谐输出,调谐范围达到 65 nm,最大输出功率处对应的波长为 755 nm。图 2(b)所示为最大输出功率时的光谱。

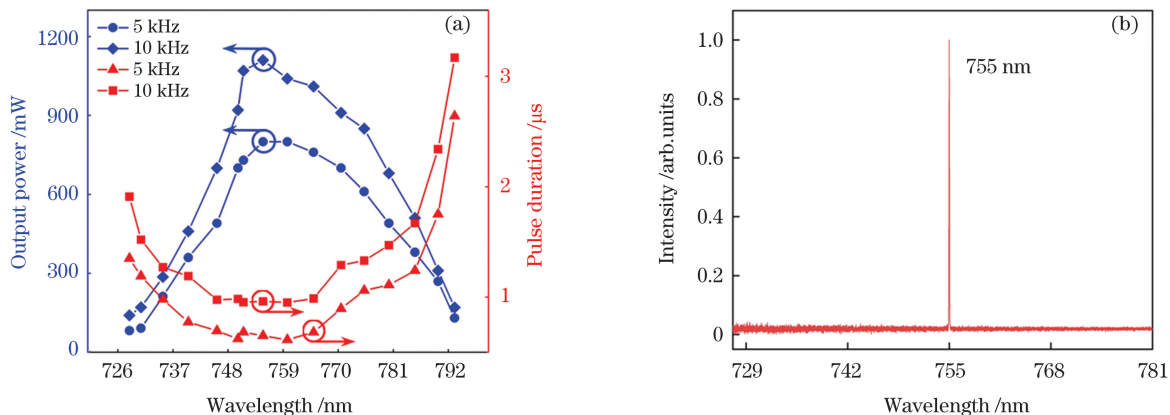


图 2 主动调 Q 翠绿宝石激光器的波长调谐输出实验结果。(a)在 5 kHz 和 10 kHz 重复频率下,不同中心波长处的输出功率及对应的脉冲宽度;(b)在 10 kHz 重复频率下最大输出功率时的光谱

Fig. 2 Experimental results of actively Q-switched Alexandrite laser for wavelength tuning. (a) Output power and pulse duration versus wavelength at 5 kHz and 10 kHz repetition rates; (b) spectrum corresponding to maximum output power at 10 kHz repetition rate

在上述实验基础上,就 755 nm 激光输出的脉冲特性开展进一步研究。图 3 所示为中心波长为 755 nm 的调 Q 激光输出的脉冲特性,包括在 5 kHz 和 10 kHz 的重复频率下,输出功率、脉冲宽度、单脉冲能量和峰值功率随吸收泵浦功率的变化情况。由于翠绿宝石晶体的受激发射截面较小(约为 $0.7 \times 10^{-20} \text{ cm}^2$),实现调 Q 输出所需的阈值较高,如图 3(a)、(c)所示,实验中的阈值达到了 10 W。在最大水平泵浦功率 25 W 的条件下,输出激光的最大平均功率达到 1.16 W[图 3(a)],对应的重复频率为 10 kHz,脉宽为 961 ns,单脉冲能量为 116 μJ ,峰值功率为 121 W,斜效率为 7%;在 5 kHz 的重复频率下,最大输出功率时的脉宽约为 570 ns,单脉冲能量为 160 μJ ,峰值功率约为 280 W,平均输出功率为 800 mW,斜效率为 4.7%。将两种不同重复频率下的实验结果进行对比,发现随着重复频率的增加,调 Q 输出的平均功率升高,但在较高重复频率下,增益介质进行能量积累的时间减少,最终脉冲宽度变宽,单脉冲

能量和峰值功率降低。此外,如图 3(a)、(c)所示,在同一重复频率条件下,脉冲宽度随着吸收泵浦功率的增加而一直减小,但变化趋势逐渐平缓。受到连续红光 LD 功率的限制,无法对更大泵浦功率下的脉宽变化进行实验研究。为此,基于主动调 Q 速率方程^[29],结合实验中的实际参数,通过数值模拟得到了 5 kHz 重复频率下大功率泵浦的翠绿宝石激光器的激光输出脉宽的变化曲线,如图 4 所示。其中,黑色实线表示模拟结果,红色圆点表示实验结果,可见在实验能够实现的功率范围内,模拟结果与实验结果吻合良好;继续增加泵浦功率,脉冲宽度会进一步缩小但变化趋势逐渐平缓,泵浦功率超过 150 W 以后,模拟的脉冲宽度稳定在 50 ns 左右。

为了获得脉宽更小的调 Q 激光输出,除了持续增加泵浦功率外,可以采用更为有效的腔倒空方案。腔倒空实验的装置仍以图 1(a)所示的装置为基础,需要将其中的 OC 替换为 700~800 nm 的高反镜,BRF 替换为偏振片并作为腔倒空实验的输出耦合镜。腔倒空

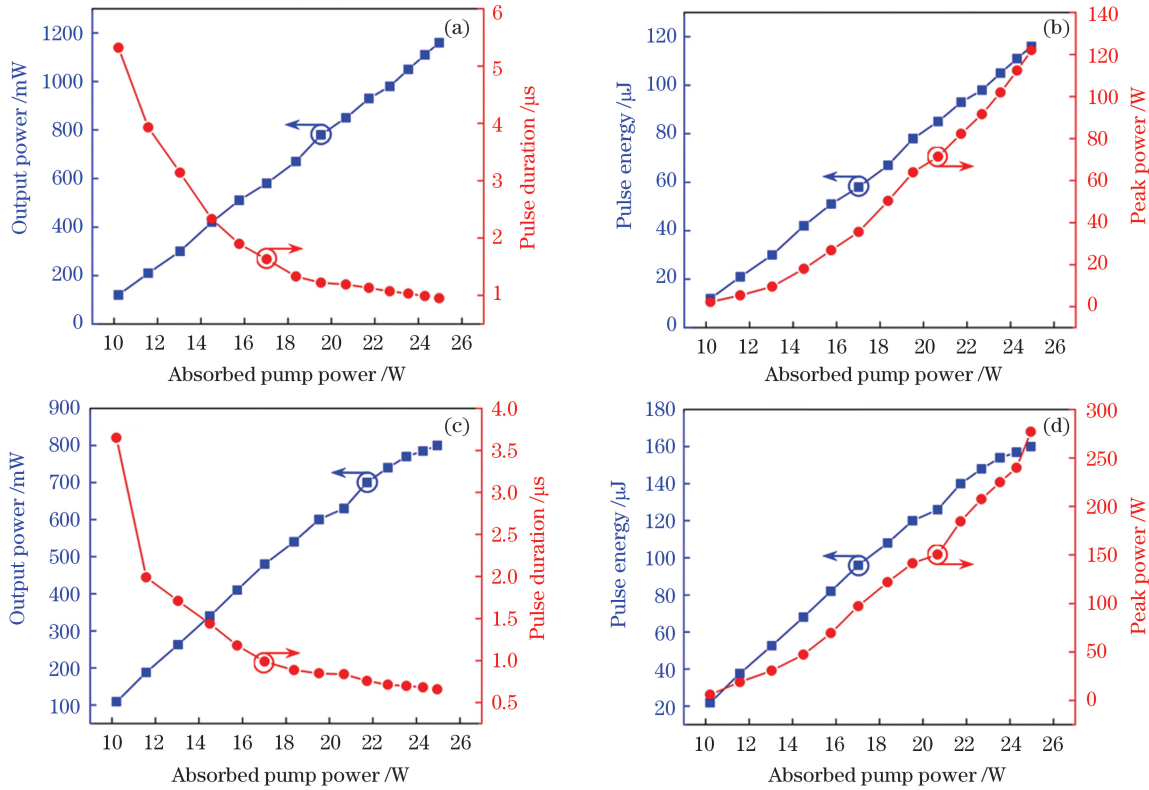


图 3 主动调 Q 翠绿宝石激光器获得 755 nm 激光输出时的实验结果。(a)10 kHz 重复频率下输出功率和脉冲宽度随吸收泵浦功率的变化；(b)10 kHz 重复频率下单脉冲能量和峰值功率随吸收泵浦功率的变化；(c)5 kHz 重复频率下输出功率和脉冲宽度随吸收泵浦功率的变化；(d)5 kHz 重复频率下单脉冲能量和峰值功率随吸收泵浦功率的变化

Fig. 3 Experimental results of actively Q-switched Alexandrite laser output at 755 nm. (a) Output power and pulse duration versus absorbed pump power at 10 kHz repetition rate; (b) single pulse energy and peak power versus absorbed pump power at 10 kHz repetition rate; (c) output power and pulse duration versus absorbed pump power at 5 kHz repetition rate; (d) single pulse energy and peak power versus absorbed pump power at 5 kHz repetition rate

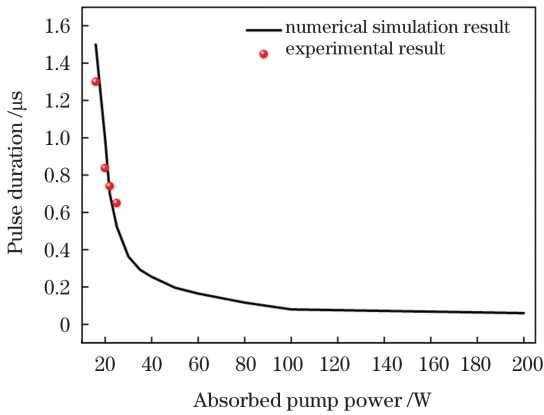


图 4 主动调 Q 翠绿宝石激光器的脉冲宽度随吸收泵浦功率的变化

Fig. 4 Pulse duration of actively Q-switched Alexandrite laser versus absorbed pump power

实验得到的脉冲宽度主要是腔长的函数^[30], 整个谐振腔长度约为 33 cm, 激光在此谐振腔内单次往返渡越时间约为 2.2 ns。实验中, 在水平泵浦功率为 21.7 W 时, 在 2~5 kHz 的重复频率范围内获得了稳定的腔倒空输出。图 5(a)所示为 5 kHz 重复频率下, 腔倒空实验的平均输出功率与吸收泵浦功率的变化关系, 可见最大输出功率为 167 mW, 中心波长为 767 nm, 脉

宽达到 10 ns[图 5(b)], 单脉冲能量约为 30 μJ, 峰值功率超过 3 kW。插图所示为最大输出功率时的光斑形状, 为良好的基模输出。腔倒空实验中光光转换效率较低, 且输出功率随吸收泵浦功率的变化呈非线性增长, 其是翠绿宝石晶体的热效应和偏振片自身的损耗引起的。热效应导致腔模发生变化, 使得谐振腔内存在多模激光振荡, 为了获得基模输出必须牺牲转换效率; 另外, 实验中所用的普通偏振片消光比不足, 不能够完全反射 s 偏振光, 也对输出功率有所影响。总之, 通过腔倒空实验方案, 可以成功将激光输出的脉冲宽度压窄至 10 ns 及以下, 通过进一步优化谐振腔损耗, 能够实现更大峰值功率的输出, 为进行非线性频率变换等研究提供条件。

3 结 论

报道了国内首个基于红光 LD 泵浦的主动调 Q 翠绿宝石激光器。实验中, 成功实现了瓦量级的平均输出功率, 达到 1.16 W, 对应的重复频率为 10 kHz, 脉冲宽度为 961 ns。通过在腔内插入 BRF, 成功实现了 728~793 nm 的波长可调谐输出, 并进一步研究了最大功率处(即 755 nm 处)的脉冲输出特性, 获得了 5 kHz 与 10 kHz 重复频率下的输出能量、脉冲宽度、

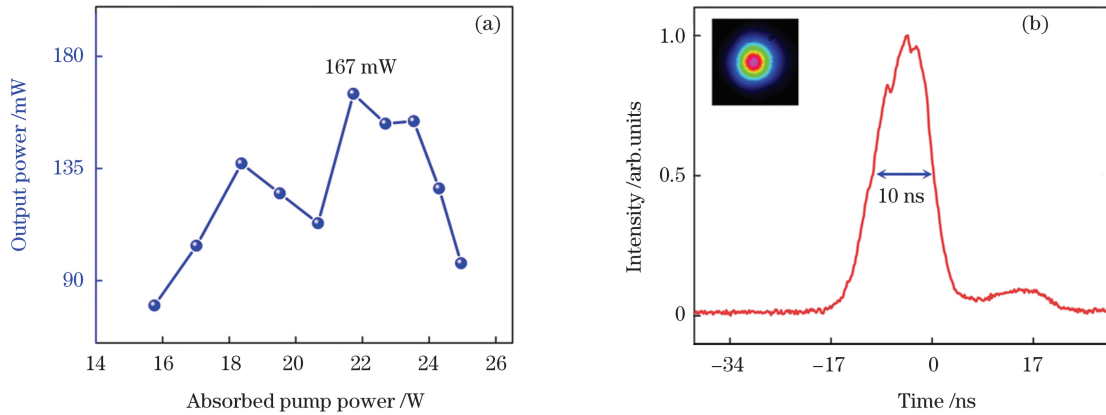


图 5 腔倒空实验结果。(a)输出功率随吸收泵浦功率的变化;(b)最大输出功率时的脉冲形状,插图为对应的光斑形状

Fig. 5 Experimental results of cavity dumping. (a) Output power versus absorbed pump power; (b) pulse shape at maximum output power with corresponding beam shape shown in inset

单脉冲能量、峰值功率随吸收泵浦功率的变化情况。在实验结果的基础上,对脉冲宽度随泵浦功率持续增大的变化情况进行了预测。此外,利用腔倒空技术,成功将脉冲压窄至 10 ns,对应的峰值功率超过 3 kW。下一步工作将在此基础上继续优化,进一步提升调 Q 激光输出的质量,面向实际需求发展高效率、大能量、短脉宽、窄线宽的红光 LD 泵浦的翠绿宝石激光器。

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LD Pumped Watt-Level Actively Q-switched Alexandrite Laser

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Abstract

Objective 700–800 nm lasers at the border of visible light and near-infrared light have been used in many fields such as nonlinear optics, remote sensing detection, laser jamming, and laser medicine. They including many different types of lasers such as dye lasers, Ti:sapphire lasers, and Alexandrite lasers. Dye lasers are developed very early, but their gain media are toxic and the maintenance of laser systems is difficult. The development of Ti: sapphire lasers is relatively mature. Because of the broad gain bandwidth of Ti:sapphire, it is mostly used in the field of ultrafast lasers. The pump source of Ti: sapphire is mainly expensive green lasers, such as 532 nm frequency-doubled Nd:YAG laser. In addition, the thermal effect of the gain medium is serious. In contrast, Alexandrite lasers can be pumped by more economical red laser diodes (LDs) because of its broad absorption spectrum. Wavelength tuning can be achieved at room temperature and the laser performance of Alexandrite increases at elevated temperatures due to its unique spectroscopic properties. Alexandrite has a long fluorescence lifetime of about 262 μs at room temperature, almost 85 times longer than that of Ti: sapphire (about 3 μs). This causes tremendous advantages of energy storage at the upper level to achieve Q-switched operation and obtain a high peak power output. Although the emission cross section is only $0.7 \times 10^{-20} \text{ cm}^2$, the high damage threshold (270 J/cm^2) provides the possibility for an Alexandrite laser to work with a high pump power. An Alexandrite laser is an ideal choice to obtain a laser output at 700–800 nm. In addition, a high power red LD is developing in recent years, and it is an excellent pump source to obtain an Alexandrite laser with high power and high pulse energy.

Methods Electro-optical Q-switched operations are used in our experiments. First, a V-shaped cavity is obtained and the length of the cavity is about 33 cm. A fiber-coupled red diode laser emitting at 638 nm with a maximum pump power of 40 W is used as the pump source. The size of an Alexandrite crystal is 3 mm \times 3 mm \times 10 mm with c-axis-cut, and it is wrapped with an indium foil and mounted in a water-cooled heat sink. By controlling the β -BaB₂O₄ (BBO) Pockels cell, a pulsed laser with a multi-kHz repetition rate is obtained. Wavelength tuning is demonstrated with birefringent filters. Then, the output power, pulse duration, pulse energy, and peak power at the wavelength corresponding to the maximum output power are analyzed. Based on the Q-switched rate equations, the variation of pulse duration at a high pump power is predicted. To obtain shorter pulse duration, cavity dumping is considered. In addition, the performances of an Alexandrite laser at different repetition rates are analyzed in our experiments.

Results and Discussions The schematic of an Alexandrite laser and its photograph are shown in Fig. 1. At the

repetition rate of 10 kHz, a watt-level laser output is obtained with a pulse duration of 961 ns and a pulse energy of 116 μJ . Wavelength tuning outputs from 728 nm to 793 nm are obtained at repetition rates of 5 kHz and 10 kHz [Fig. 2 (a)] with the combination of birefringent filters (BRFs) in different thicknesses, and the wavelength corresponding to the maximum output power is 755 nm. The pulse characteristics including output power, pulse duration, pulse energy, and peak power at 755 nm with 10 kHz and 5 kHz repetition rates are analyzed (Fig. 3). Based on the Q -switched rate equations, a well-matched numerical simulation is obtained. The variation of pulse duration with absorbed pump power is simulated (Fig. 4). The predicted shortest pulse duration at a high enough pump power is about 50 ns. Furthermore, a short pulsed laser of 10 ns is achieved by cavity dumping [Fig. 5 (b)], whose peak power is over 3 kW.

Conclusions This paper presents a red LD pumped Q -switched Alexandrite laser. A watt-level pulsed laser is obtained in a V-shaped cavity. The corresponding repetition rate is 10 kHz, the pulse duration is 961 ns, and the pulse energy is 116 μJ . Wavelength tuning from 728 to 793 nm is demonstrated with BRF. Based on the Q -switched rate equations, a well-matched numerical simulation is obtained, and the effect of pump energy on pulse duration is analyzed. A shorter pulse laser of 10 ns is also achieved by cavity dumping and the peak power is over 3 kW. In the future work, we will continue to optimize the design of the cavity and the experimental parameters. Based on the need of specific applications, we will try to achieve higher-energy, higher-efficiency, shorter pulse duration, and narrower linewidth Alexandrite lasers pumped by red LDs.

Key words lasers; Alexandrite laser; red laser diode; active Q -switching; cavity dumping; wavelength tuning