

低数值孔径部分掺杂纺锤形光纤实现 4 kW 近衍射极限激光输出

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摘要 采用改进的化学气相沉积工艺结合溶液掺杂技术成功制备了一种低数值孔径部分掺杂纺锤形光纤。该光纤的数值孔径约为 0.05, 镱离子在纤芯中的掺杂直径比约为 77%, 光纤两端纤芯和包层的直径分别为 25 μm 和 400 μm , 中间部分纤芯和包层的直径分别为 37.5 μm 和 600 μm 。搭建 976 nm 双端泵浦光纤放大器, 该光纤最终实现了 4.188 kW 的单模激光输出, 斜率效率为 82.8%, 最高功率下的光束质量因子约为 1.3, 其输出功率的继续提升受限于受激拉曼散射效应。

关键词 光纤光学; 掺镱光纤; 光纤设计; 横向模式不稳定; 受激拉曼散射; 光束质量

中图分类号 TN248

文献标志码 A

DOI: 10.3788/CJL202249.1315002

高功率掺镱光纤激光器具有光束质量好、转化效率高、可靠性高等优势, 已被广泛应用于工业加工、军事国防等领域^[1-2]。随着双包层光纤、半导体激光器和光无源器件的发展, 掺镱光纤激光器的输出功率得到了迅猛提升^[3-4], 但输出功率在受激拉曼散射 (SRS) 和横向模式不稳定 (TMI) 等非线性效应的影响下不能进一步提升^[5]。为了抑制这两种效应, 从有源光纤本身出发优化光纤的结构设计是一条最有效、最根本的途径。其中常见的措施包括: 1) 降低纤芯的数值孔径 (NA), 这使得纤芯将支持更少的模式, 甚至只支持基模 (FM), 从而提高了光纤激光器的 TMI 阈值和光束质量^[6]; 2) 增益离子的限制性掺杂, 这可使 FM 在模式竞争中处于主导地位, 同时抑制高阶模 (HOM), 提升 TMI 阈值^[7-8]; 3) 纤芯纵向呈长锥形分布, 通过小端控制模式, 大端拥有更大的模场面积, 可达到同时均衡和抑制 TMI 和 SRS 效应的效果^[9-10]。

低数值孔径部分掺杂纺锤形光纤 (简称“LCT 光纤”) 同时结合了纤芯较低的数值孔径、Yb³⁺ 离子限制性掺杂和纵向双锥形设计这三种结构优势, 理论上能较好地实现 TMI 和 SRS 效应的同时抑制。本团队采用改进的化学气相沉积工艺结合溶液掺杂法制备了 LCT 光纤, 其结构和参数如图 1 所示, 光纤纤芯的数值孔径约为 0.05, 增益掺杂剂——Yb³⁺ 离子的掺杂直

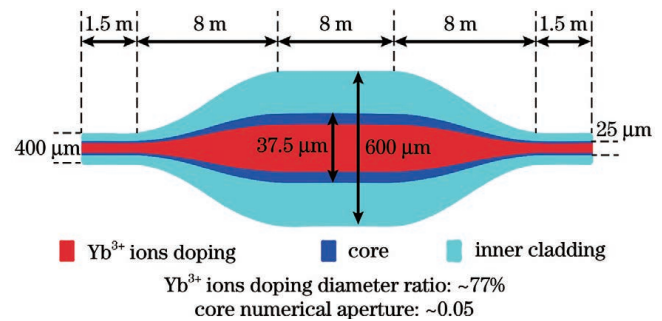


图 1 低数值孔径部分掺杂纺锤形光纤的结构和参数 (非按比例绘制)

Fig. 1 Structure and parameters of low-numerical aperture confined-doped long-tapered fiber (not to scale)

径比约为 77%。在纵向上, LCT 光纤的纤芯和内包层直径处于均匀的变化状态, 呈“纺锤形”, 两端纤芯和包层的直径分别为 25 μm 和 400 μm , 中间部分纤芯和包层的直径分别为 37.5 μm 和 600 μm , 小端、过渡区和中间段的长度分别为 1.5、8、8 m, 总长为 27 m。测得该光纤在 976 nm 处的吸收系数约为 0.9 dB/m。

基于 LCT 光纤的 976 nm 双端泵浦光纤放大器的结构如图 2 所示。采用输出功率约为 100 W、光束质量因子 M^2 约为 1.2 的种子源作为主振荡器。包层光滤除器 (CLS) 能进一步滤除种子中的包层光, 滤除包层光后的种子光经模场适配器后耦合到前向泵浦信

收稿日期: 2022-03-22; 修回日期: 2022-04-08; 录用日期: 2022-04-19

基金项目: 国家自然科学基金 (61735007, 61975061)

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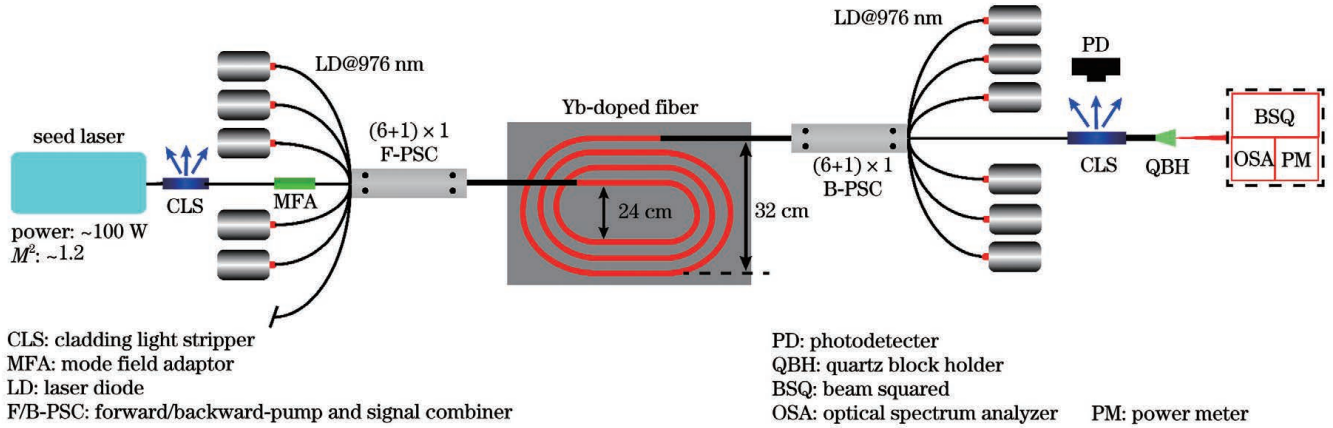


图 2 基于低数值孔径部分掺杂纺锤形光纤的双端泵浦光纤放大器的结构示意图

Fig. 2 Structure diagram of bidirectional-pumped amplifier based on low-numerical aperture confined-doped long-tapered fiber

号合束器(F-PSC)中。每个半导体激光器(LD)能提供约 700 W 的泵浦功率,LD 为 976 nm 非稳波长泵浦源。LCT 光纤盘绕在跑道型水冷板的凹槽中,最小和最大弯曲直径分别为 24 cm 和 32 cm。放大后的信号光经由后向泵浦信号合束器(B-PSC)耦合输出,CLS 将包层中的剩余泵浦光和激光滤除,散射光由光电探测器(PD)接收,其时频特性由示波器显示,用来监控 TMI 进程。最后,留存在纤芯中的激光被石英扩束输出头(QBH)扩束输出。采用光束质量分析仪(BSQ)、光谱分析仪(OSA)和万瓦功率计(PM)分别测试激光的光束质量、光谱成分和输出功率。

LCT 光纤放大器的实验结果如图 3 所示,可见,其激光性能表现优异。如图 3(a)所示,输出功率随着泵浦功率增大而持续增大,最高输出功率为 4.188 kW,未出现功率滞涨或翻转,拟合的斜率效率为 82.8%。如图 3(b)所示,在双端泵浦情况下,光谱上出现了较强的拉曼光成分,在 4.188 kW 时, SRS 抑制比仅为约 18 dB。如图 3(c)、(d)所示, LCT 光纤放大器工作在 4.188 kW 时,时频域信号稳定,预示着无 TMI 效应发生,光束质量因子 M^2 约为 1.3,保持单模输出。

LCT 光纤以其优异的结构特性,在 4.188 kW 输

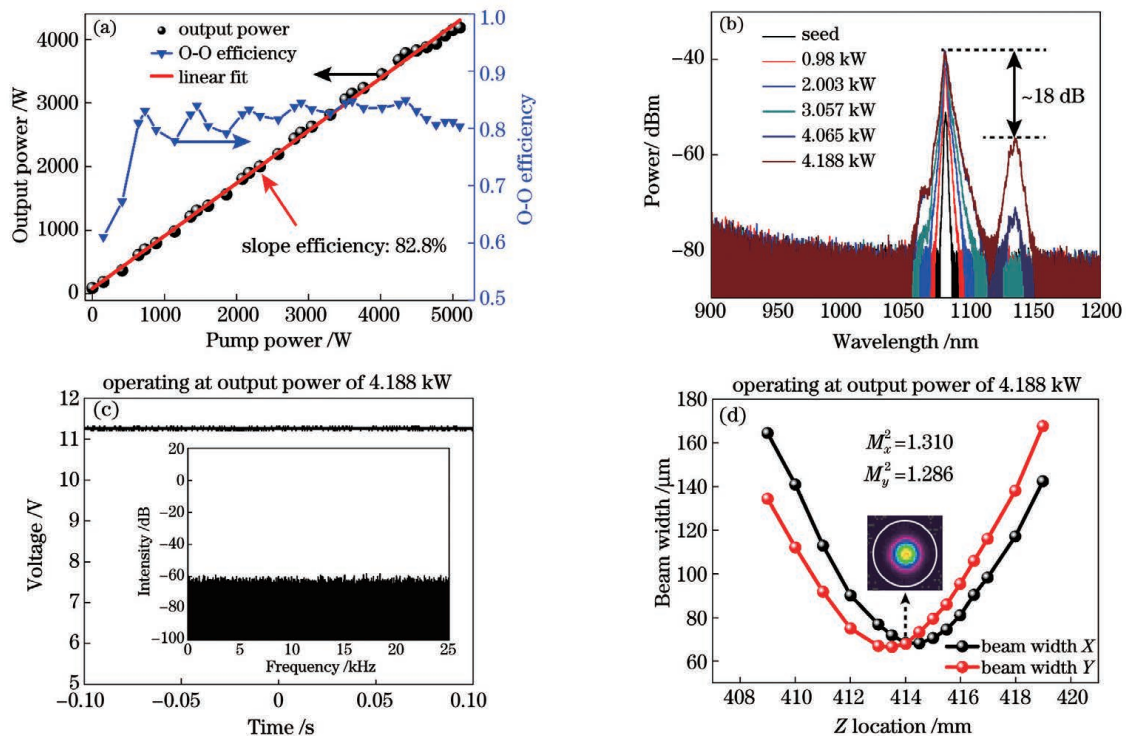


图 3 低数值孔径部分掺杂纺锤形光纤的性能。(a)输出功率与泵浦功率的变化关系;(b)输出光谱;(c)最高功率(4188 W)下的时域和频域特性;(d)最高功率下的光束质量特性

Fig. 3 Performance of low-numerical aperture confined-doped long-tapered fiber. (a) Output power versus pump power; (b) output optical spectrum; (c) time- and frequency-domain characteristics at the highest power (4.188 kW); (d) beam quality at the highest power

输出功率下,仍未出现 TMI 效应,且光束质量仍保持单模。然而,由于光纤的吸收较低,因此采用的光纤长度较长,这就不可避免地较早出现 SRS 效应,阻碍了输出功率的进一步提升。接下来拟将研究重点集中于优化光纤结构和吸收上,以抑制较早出现的 SRS 效应,进一步提升激光器的输出功率。

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4 kW Near-Diffraction-Limit Laser Output Based on Low-Numerical Aperture Confined-Doped Long-Tapered Fiber

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Abstract

Objective High-power ytterbium-doped fiber lasers (YDFs) have good beam quality, high conversion efficiency, high reliability, and good compactness, making them widely usable in industrial processing, military, and national defense fields. The output power of YDFs has been unprecedentedly improved with the development of double-clad fiber, laser diodes, and passive devices. This unprecedented progress is hampered by nonlinear effects, such as stimulated Raman scattering (SRS) and transverse mode instability (TMI). The most effective and fundamental way to suppress these two effects is to optimize the structure design of active fiber. We propose a low-numerical aperture confined-doped long-tapered (LCT) fiber that combines the advantages of low numerical aperture (NA), Yb³⁺ ions restricted doping, and longitudinal tapered design and can theoretically suppress TMI and SRS effects simultaneously.

Methods The LCT fiber is proposed and successfully fabricated using modified chemical vapor deposition (MCVD) in conjunction with a solution doping technique (SDT). The LCT fiber has a core NA of ~0.05 and a gain dopant doping diameter ratio of ~77%, with a core/cladding diameter of 25/400 μm at both ends and 37.5/600 μm in the middle. A bidirectional-pumped master oscillator power amplifier (MOPA) system verifies the laser performance of the LCT fiber.

Results and Discussions A laser output of 4.188 kW was obtained with a slope efficiency of 82.8% (Fig. 3). The intensity of the Raman Stokes light was ~18 dB lower than that of the signal laser at 4.188 kW output power, and the M^2

factor was about 1.3, maintaining a single-mode output. Further optimization will focus on improving the pump absorption and effective mode area of this fiber to mitigate SRS.

Conclusions We present a novel low-NA (0.05) confined-doped long-tapered fiber fabricated using the MCVD process in conjunction with SDT. The Yb-ions doping diameter ratio is $\sim 77\%$, and the middle section core/cladding diameter is $37.5/600\ \mu\text{m}$, tapering to $25/400\ \mu\text{m}$ at both ends. In the bidirectional pumping MOPA configuration, a 4.188 kW laser is obtained with a slope efficiency of 82.8%. The M^2 factor is about 1.3 at 4.188 kW output power, maintaining a single-mode output. The results above reveal that using low-NA confined-doped long-tapered Yb-doped fiber to achieve high power output with high brightness is a promising prospect.

Key words fiber optics; ytterbium-doped fiber; fiber design; transverse mode instability; stimulated Raman scattering; beam quality