

国产两万瓦级同带泵浦掺镱双包层光纤

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摘要 同带泵浦是目前实现高功率光纤激光器的主要技术之一。报道了一种自主研发的同带泵浦掺镱双包层光纤, 采用改进的化学气相沉积工艺结合液相掺杂工艺, 通过纤芯组分设计和制棒工艺优化, 提高了高掺杂光纤纤芯折射率的均匀性。基于所研制的 47 μm / 400 μm 光纤搭建了全光纤化主振荡功率放大器, 采用同带泵浦方式, 实现了高受激拉曼散射(SRS)抑制比的 20.88 kW 激光输出, 中心波长为 1080 nm, 斜率效率为 82.7%。这是目前国内光纤以同带泵浦方式实现的最高功率。

关键词 光纤光学; 掺镱双包层光纤; 气相/液相掺杂工艺; 同带泵浦

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1 引言

双包层掺镱光纤激光器以其稳定性高、光束质量好、电光效率高等优势, 在工业加工、先进制造、国防等领域有着广泛的应用^[1-2]。近年来, 随着激光光纤研制技术的提高, 国产掺镱光纤激光器的输出功率已达到万瓦量级。2018年, 中国工程物理研究院激光聚变研究中心采用直接抽运方式, 利用中国电子科技集团公司第四十六研究所研制的光纤, 实现了单纤激光系统 10.6 kW 的激光输出^[3]。但是随着激光输出功率的提高, 传统的直接泵浦方式存在难以有效解决的热效应问题。同带泵浦使用光纤激光光源作为泵浦源, 具有更高的亮度, 有效增加了泵浦注入, 减小了量子亏损, 降低了光纤热负荷, 是高功率光纤激光放大研究的重要趋势^[4-6]。高镱离子掺杂浓度的同带泵浦激光光纤也成为近几年万瓦以上高功率光纤激光器领域的研发重点。

2018年, 清华大学精密仪器系利用中国电子科技集团公司第四十六研究所生产的光纤, 采用同带泵浦方式, 实现了 3000 W 的激光输出^[7]。2021年5月, 中国工程物理研究院化工材料研究所采用同

带泵浦方式, 利用自制的国产掺镱有源光纤, 实现了单纤 20 kW 的激光输出^[8]。

本文报道了一种自主研发的掺镱双包层光纤, 采用改进的化学气相沉积工艺结合液相掺杂工艺, 在现有的技术基础上, 对关键工艺过程进行了改进优化; 通过优化调整纤芯掺杂元素配比, 采用多层沉积技术, 进一步提高了镱离子的掺杂浓度和掺杂均匀性, 有效降低了掺镱光纤在高掺杂浓度下的本底损耗, 同时保证掺镱光纤具有优异的抗光子暗化能力。研制的掺镱光纤由中国工程物理研究院激光聚变研究中心进行了放大测试, 实现了同带泵浦 20.88 kW 激光输出, 这是目前国内单纤的最高功率水平^[9]。

2 光纤的制备技术

掺镱光纤在 1018 nm 波长处的吸收峰比 975 nm 吸收峰小一个量级, 所以 1018 nm 同带泵浦掺镱光纤需要非常高的掺杂浓度。实验采用液相掺镱、气相掺铝技术制备掺镱光纤预制棒。首先沉积阻挡层, 然后低温沉积含有磷离子和铝离子的疏松芯层, 再进行镱离子溶液掺杂。将含有镱离子的溶

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液注入到反应管中浸泡疏松层,静置一段时间让镱离子充分扩散到疏松层的空隙中,取出剩余溶液,并对疏松层进行脱水处理,高温下将疏松层玻璃化。然后再沉积疏松层,浸泡疏松层,玻璃化疏松层。多次芯层沉积后将反应管高温烧缩成含有镱离子的光纤预制棒,然后根据测试结果对预制棒进行加套,将内包层加工成八角形结构,进而拉制成双包层掺镱光纤。

无论采用液相掺杂工艺还是气相掺杂工艺进行镱离子的掺杂,镱离子浓度的分布都会出现不均匀的现象,进而导致光纤出现热效应、光子暗化效应等。对于高掺杂浓度的掺镱光纤,确保高掺杂浓度下各元素掺杂的均匀性显得更为重要。在光纤制备实验初期,通过对光纤折射率曲线形状以及掺杂离子浓度的分布情况进行分析,发现随着 1018 nm 同带泵浦光纤纤芯中各元素掺杂浓度的成倍增加,在

沉积过程中,由于各元素的挥发浓度不同,纤芯中间各元素浓度存在缺陷,纤芯折射率曲线的凸起现象非常严重,激光实验时光束质量差,具体测试结果如图 1、2 所示。

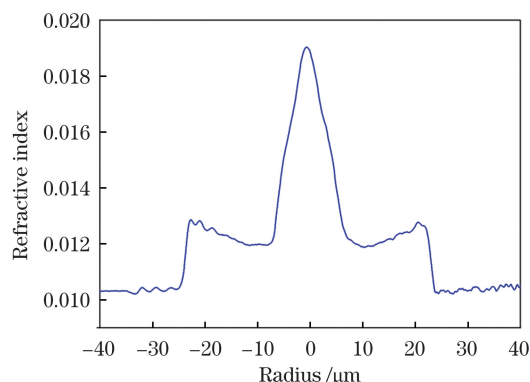


图 1 改进前的光纤折射率分布情况

Fig. 1 Refractive index profile of fiber before improvement

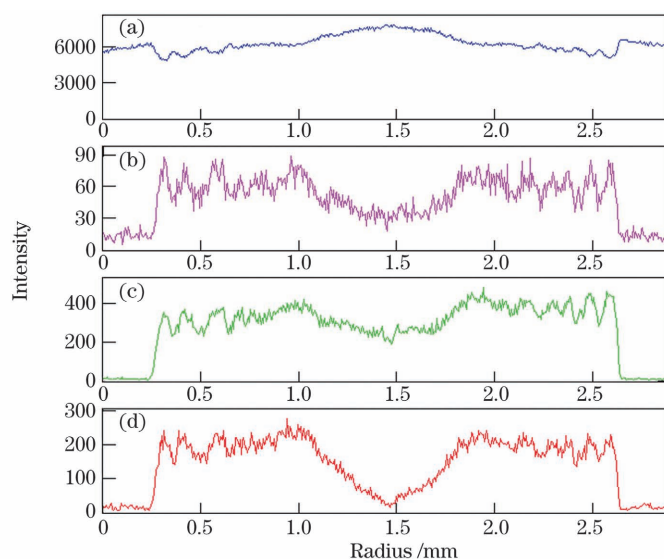


图 2 工艺改进前的纤芯掺杂元素分布情况。(a)Si;(b)Yb;(c)Al;(d)P

Fig. 2 Doped element distributions in fiber core before process improvement. (a) Si; (b) Yb; (c) Al; (d) P

为了优化光纤纤芯掺杂离子浓度的分布情况,本文在实验中对光纤设计参数和制备工艺等进行了改进,包括:1)优化疏松芯层的沉积温度、调整热源的移动速度和原料流量配比等参数,采用疏松层反向沉积技术,有效保证沉积的疏松芯层中微孔尺寸及分布的均匀性,从而有效提高了纤芯元素掺杂的均匀性;2)采用多层渐变沉积技术,进一步提高了镱离子的掺杂均匀性,同时有效消除了高掺杂浓度下纤芯折射率曲线凸起的现象。通过电子探针 X 射线显微分析仪分析纤芯镱离子分布的均匀性,发现多层沉积技术可以大大提高纤芯镱离子分布的均匀性,具体测试结果如图 3、4 所示。

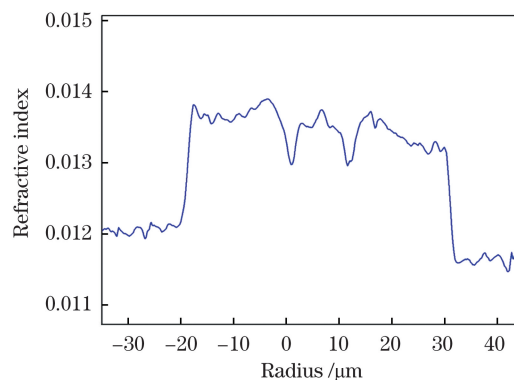


图 3 改进后的光纤折射率分布情况

Fig. 3 Refractive index profile of fiber after improvement

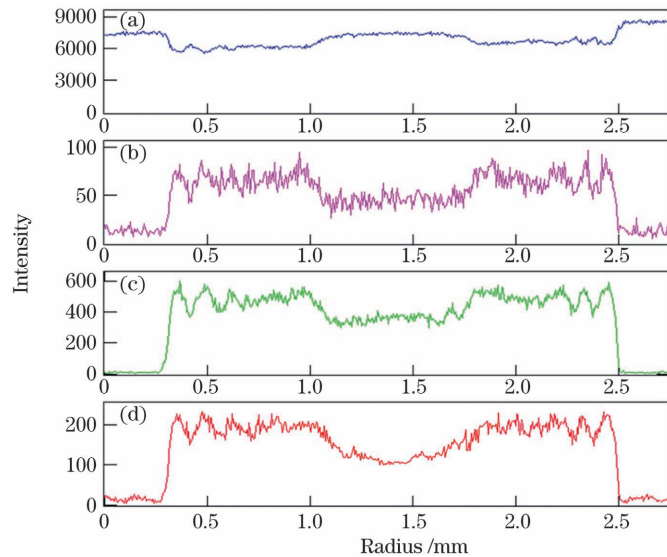


图 4 工艺改进后的纤芯掺杂元素分布情况。(a)Si;(b)Yb;(c)Al;(d)P

Fig. 4 Doped element distributions in fiber core after improvement. (a) Si; (b) Yb; (c) Al; (d) P

可以看出,经过光纤设计参数和制备工艺的改进,光纤纤芯镱离子的掺杂浓度和掺杂均匀性大幅度提高,光纤折射率分布均匀,折射率曲线的中心凸起现象得到有效消除,成功制备出均匀掺杂的高掺杂浓度的掺镱光纤。

3 光纤的性能测试

利用改进的化学气相沉积工艺,结合液相掺杂工艺,制备出的掺镱双包层光纤的主要参数如表 1 所示。

表 1 掺镱双包层光纤参数

Table 1 Parameters for Yb-doped double-cladding fiber

Parameter	Unit	Content
Core diameter	μm	47.3
Cladding diameter(side to side)	μm	399.6
Cladding shape	-	Regular octagon
Cladding absorptivity @1018 nm	dB/m	0.72
Core attenuation coefficient @1200 nm	dB/km	10.8
Cladding attenuation coefficient @1095 nm	dB/km	2.28
Numerical aperture of core	-	0.0687
Numerical aperture of cladding	-	0.468

掺镱双包层光纤的端面图如图 5 所示,纤芯直径为 $47.3 \mu\text{m}$,内包层(边-边)直径为 $399.6 \mu\text{m}$ 。光纤折射率分布如图 3 所示,对制备的光纤进行电子探针扫描分析,纤芯中掺杂元素(Yb、Al、P)的分布如图 4 所示。

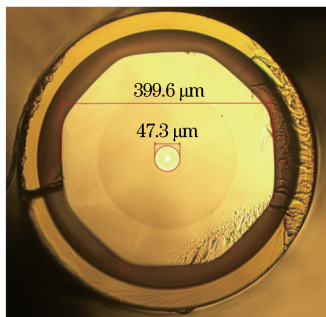


图 5 掺镱双包层光纤端面图

Fig. 5 End face of Yb-doped double-cladding fiber

采用截断法测试 $47 \mu\text{m}/400 \mu\text{m}$ 掺镱双包层光纤的吸收系数,具体测量结果如图 6 所示,光纤在

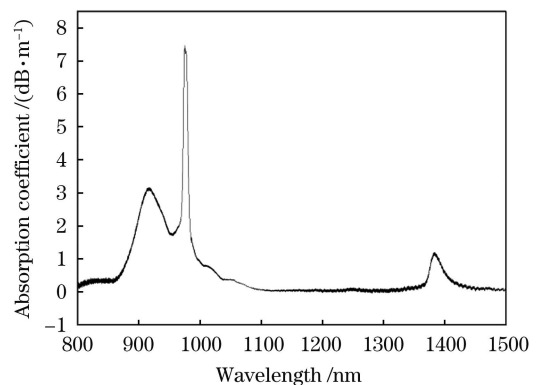


图 6 掺镱双包层光纤的吸收系数图

Fig. 6 Absorption coefficient of Yb-doped double-cladding fiber

1018 nm 处的吸收系数达到 0.72 dB/m 左右。

中国工程物理研究院激光聚变研究中心基于该光纤搭建了主振荡功率放大器以测试光纤的激光性能,激光器具体光学设计如图 7 所示。泵浦源由 5 组 5 kW@1018 nm 激光器组成,在振荡器和放大器之间,加入自主研发的通过串联刻写实现带阻滤波的倾斜光栅阵列,通过降低种子激光中的拉曼频段噪声来改善系统受激拉曼散射(SRS)抑制效果。放大器所用的增益光纤长度在 33 m 左右,信号光插入损耗为

0.5 dB,在放大级注入的泵浦激光功率达到 24.56 kW@1018 nm 时,输出端得到 20.88 kW 的激光功率输出,去除残余泵浦光后,系统的斜率效率为 82.7%,光束质量因子(β_{FL})为 2.96,具体功率变化如图 8 所示。最大输出功率时的激光光谱如图 9 所示,可以看出,输出激光光谱无典型斯托克斯峰,拉曼抑制比达到 18.6 dB,光谱信号的中心波长为 1080 nm,3 dB 处的线宽为 2.1 nm。在高功率时输出激光光束质量保持稳定,随功率的增大未出现明显退化。

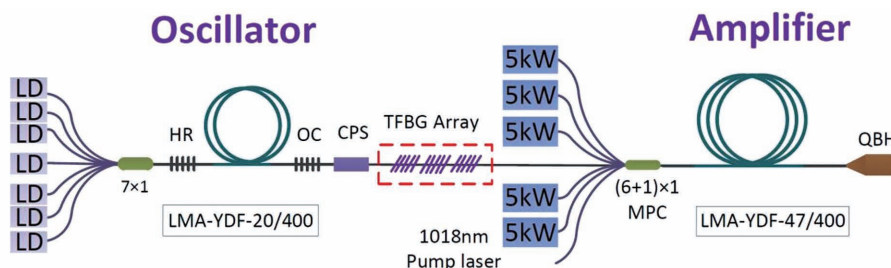


图 7 光纤激光系统示意图^[9]

Fig. 7 Schematic of fiber laser system^[9]

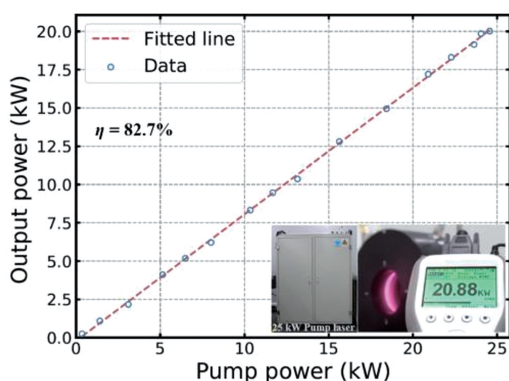


图 8 输出功率随泵浦功率的变化^[9]

Fig. 8 Output power versus pump power^[9]

掺镱双包层光纤光学性能的测试结果说明国产光纤的制作技术日趋成熟,已经具备实现高功率激光输出的能力。

4 结 论

同带泵浦激光光纤是实现高功率光纤激光器的关键部分。设计并实现了一种掺镱双包层光纤,采用改进的化学气相沉积工艺,结合液相掺杂工艺,制备了高镱离子掺杂浓度和高掺杂均匀性的同带泵浦掺镱双包层光纤。中国工程物理研究院激光聚变研究中心基于该光纤进行了单纤激光集成技术研究,实现了同带泵浦 20.88 kW 激光输出,这是目前国内单纤最高功率水平,标志着中国电子科技集团公司第四十六研究所在国产光纤研究制备方面以及中

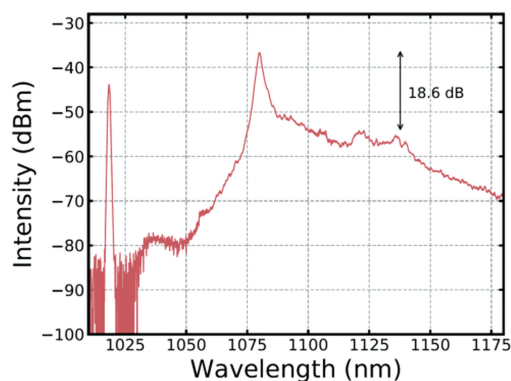


图 9 最大输出功率时的激光光谱^[9]

Fig. 9 Laser spectrum at maximum output power^[9]

国工程物理研究院激光聚变研究中心在单纤激光集成技术研究方面均取得了突破性成果。

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Homemade 20 kW Yb-Doped Double-Cladding Fiber for Tandem Pumping

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Abstract

Objective With the development of Yb-doped fiber lasers, the output power of a single domestic fiber has reached the 10 kW level. With the increase of laser output power, the thermal effect problem of traditional direct pumping is difficult to be solved effectively. Owing to the low quantum deficit and high brightness, the tandem pumping employing Yb-doped fiber lasers as the pumping source can effectively reduce this thermal issue and achieve a high output power, which is an important trend in the research of high-power fiber laser amplification. Because of the much lower absorption coefficient at 1018 nm than that at 976 nm, the tandem pumping configuration needs a longer gain fiber to sufficiently absorb pump light, which in turn induces a severer nonlinear effect, bringing in more challenges in fiber lasers. In 2018, the Department of Precision Instruments of Tsinghua University reported the use of a domestic gain fiber produced by China Electronics Technology Group Corporation No. 46 Research Institute to achieve a 3000 W laser output based on tandem pumping. In May 2021, the China Academy of Engineering Physics (CAEP) used the homemade Yb-doped active fiber to realize the laser output of 20 kW by using the tandem pumping method. To achieve a higher output-power, here a highly Yb-doped double-cladding fiber is proposed used for tandem pumping.

Methods The Yb-doped double-cladding fiber preform is prepared by the improved chemical vapor deposition (MCVD) method combined with the solution doping technique. Based on the existing technology, the key process is improved and optimized. Through the design of fiber core components and the optimization of the multi-layer deposition technology, the doping concentration and the uniform distribution of Yb ions are improved. The background loss of an Yb-doped fiber under high doping concentration is effectively reduced. The refractive index distribution of the improved fiber is shown in Fig. 3, and the doped element distribution in the improved fiber core is

shown in Fig. 4.

Results and Discussions The cross section of the Yb-doped double-cladding fiber is shown in Fig. 5, and the main fiber parameters are shown in Table 1. The diameters of the core and inner cladding of the Yb-doped double-cladding fiber are $47\ \mu\text{m}$ and $400\ \mu\text{m}$, respectively. The fiber has a more uniform distribution of Yb ions, a larger absorption cross section, and a higher absorption coefficient. The numerical aperture of the fiber is 0.069/0.46, and the fiber has inner cladding absorption of approximately 0.72 dB/m at 1018 nm (Fig. 6). Based on the improved fiber, an all-fiber master oscillator power amplifier is built. Figure 7 shows the experimental setup. In the power amplifying stage, a 33 m long gain fiber is pumped by a 1018 nm fiber laser. When the pump laser power injected in the amplifier stage reaches 24.56 kW, the laser power output of 20.88 kW at 1080 nm is obtained, and the system slope efficiency is 82.7% after removing the residual pump light (Fig. 8). In addition, the output laser spectrum has no typical Stokes peaks and the 3 dB bandwidth of the output laser is measured to be 2.1 nm (Fig. 9). To the best of our knowledge, this marks the highest result ever reported for homemade Yb-doped double-cladding fibers based on tandem pumping.

Conclusions Tandem pumping is one of the main technical approaches to realize high power fiber lasers. By combining the improved chemical vapor deposition method with the solution doping technique, we have fabricated an Yb-doped double-cladding fiber. Through the design of fiber core components and the optimization of the rod making process, the uniformity of the refractive index of the highly doped fiber core is improved. The laser performance of the fiber is demonstrated by an all-fiber master oscillator power amplifying laser system. As for the 1081 nm fiber laser based on tandem pumping, a 20.88 kW laser output at 1080 nm with a high stimulated Raman scattering rejection ratio has been achieved with an 82.7% slope efficiency. This is the highest power achieved for the domestic fiber based on tandem pumping.

Key words fiber optics; Yb-doped double-cladding fiber; vapor phase/ liquid phase doping; tandem pumping