

光学学报

自研(1+1)分布式侧面泵浦光纤实现20 kW激光输出

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摘要 基于改进的化学气相沉积预制棒制备技术和多光纤并束拉丝光纤拉制工艺, 成功制备了(1+1)型分布式侧面泵浦光纤, 其中信号纤芯/包层尺寸为60/300 μm, 泵浦纤芯尺寸为310 μm。通过主振荡功率放大结构搭建反向泵浦放大系统, 以1018 nm激光器为级联泵浦源, 该光纤激光器最终实现了20.13 kW的最高功率输出, 经过拟合后的斜率效率为82.3%, 由泵浦纤反向端输出的残余泵浦比例的最大值为6%, 信号光受激拉曼散射抑制比达到37.65 dB。在测试中, 光纤所有部位均表现出优异的热负载性能, 这是首次通过(1+1)型分布式侧面泵浦方式实现了20 kW的单根光纤输出功率。

关键词 光纤光学; 高功率光纤激光器; 分布式侧面泵浦; 残余泵浦; 受激拉曼散射

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近年来, 光纤激光因在光束质量控制、转换效率、热管理和轻量化应用等方面具有独特的优势, 被广泛应用于医药医疗、工业加工、增材制造和国防安全等领域^[1-2]。高亮度半导体泵浦源、双包层泵浦技术以及特种光纤材料的进步, 推动光纤激光器的输出功率实现了量级跃迁^[3], 级联泵浦技术的出现则进一步将全纤化激光器输出功率提升至20 kW水平^[4-7]。常规端面泵浦方式普遍采用熔融拉锥合束器(TFB)来实现泵浦激光整合与注入, 然而当注入泵浦功率逐渐增加至数千瓦乃至数十千瓦时, TFB插入损耗和内包层尺寸的约束会使得TFB本身和有源光纤注入点处的热负荷明显增加, 容易引起热损伤。此外, TFB的熔融拉锥区域容易导致信号光模场畸变, 激发出高阶模式, 从而引起光束质量退化。与之不同, 分布式侧面耦合包层泵浦(DSCCP^[8]; 也称作GTWave^[9-10]、PIFL^[11]、LDSFP^[12]等)在整根光纤长度上采用光纤侧面进行分散注入, 有效降低了注入区域处的能量峰值密度, 同时信号纤的完整纤芯结构不被破坏, 在高功率情形下克服了TFB存在的热负荷集中和光束质量退化的缺陷^[9]。

DSCCP光纤由一根具备增益能力的有源信号纤

和若干根无源多模泵浦纤组成, 以共同涂覆层在外层实现整体包裹。泵浦激光由泵浦纤一端或两端注入, 通过倏逝波在泵浦纤与信号纤之间实现耦合, 在耦合进入信号纤包层后以包层泵浦的形式激发信号纤芯中的稀土离子, 从而实现激光增益放大。高功率单纤激光中限制功率提升的主要难题是泵浦注入和极高的热负荷, 级联泵浦和分布式侧面泵浦相结合在解决该难题方面具有独特的优势, 对于实现数十千瓦级单纤超高功率输出具有更高的可行性。在级联泵浦技术发展方面, 2009年美国IPG公司通过级联泵浦技术首次实现单纤单模10 kW激光输出^[13], 成为光纤激光发展史的里程碑节点。在DSCCP技术研究方面, 国内外多家单位开展了相关研究, 国外以SPI和IPG公司为代表^[9], 国内则主要集中于中国工程物理研究院激光聚变研究中心和国防科技大学。在采用(1+1)型DSCCP光纤的公开报道中, 最高单纤输出功率为本课题组实现的17.4 kW^[12,14]。

近期研究中, 本课题组对纤芯材料组分进行了进一步设计优化和工艺改进, 在预制棒高掺杂浓度和低损耗两个方面得到进一步改善。针对光纤之间泵浦耦

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合系数偏低的问题,对并束拉丝过程构建了仿真模型,梳理了信号纤与泵浦纤组合方式对泵浦耦合的影响,根据理论指导改进了并束拉丝工艺参数,显著改善了耦合系数,在有限长度下由泵浦纤反向端输出的残余泵浦比例显著降低。

在光纤参数设计上,主要考虑以泵浦注入、光纤热负载和受激拉曼散射(SRS)为代表的非线性效应。光纤泵浦注入耦合能力决定了信号纤及泵浦纤的包层尺寸,光纤转换效率、热负载及非线性效应管控则决定了纤芯尺寸、光纤长度等参数。有源预制棒通过改进的化学气相沉积方法制备,将有源预制棒和无源泵浦预制棒在拉丝塔上按预定位置排列后,进行并束拉丝且一次成型。通过理论仿真与前期实验迭代对参数进行优化后,自主研制的DSCCP光纤由1根纤芯/包层尺寸为60/300 μm的信号纤和1根纤芯尺寸为310 μm的泵浦纤组成(1+1)型结构,光纤有效吸收区域的长度为35 m,图1为基于上述DSCCP光纤搭建的主振荡功率放大激光器示意图。

率放大激光器示意图。为提高泵浦注入能力,实验中采用高亮度的1018 nm光纤激光器作为泵浦源,其相较于常用的976/915 nm波长LD泵浦源具有更小的量子亏损,更有利降低热负载压力,以实现功率的进一步提升。振荡器采用20/400 μm掺镱有源光纤与1080 nm光纤光栅组合的谐振腔结构,5组输出功率约5 kW的1018 nm泵浦激光经自研5×1合束器^[15]后,反向注入DSCCP泵浦纤中。在放大器与振荡器之间插入一组自行研制的高抑制比倾斜光纤光栅阵列^[16],以滤除种子激光中的拉曼噪声,提升受激拉曼散射阈值。在信号纤末端,为抑制高功率下受激拉曼散射在传能光纤中的剧烈增益,采用约0.5 m长的80/300 μm大芯径光纤作为匹配光纤,并熔接石英端帽进行激光输出。未被吸收的残余1018 nm泵浦激光由泵浦纤反向端经石英端帽输出。DSCCP光纤盘绕在铝制冷板热沉槽中,盘绕直径为30~60 cm,冷板内部通过循环水进行制冷。

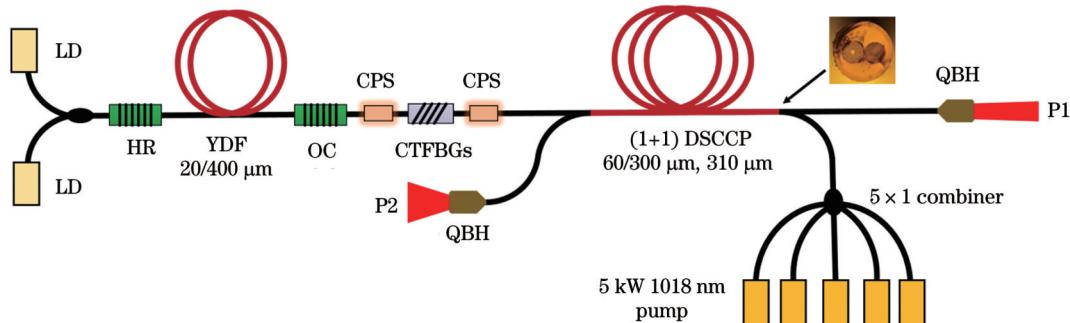


图1 (1+1)型分布式侧面泵浦光纤激光器示意图

Fig. 1 Schematic of (1+1) DS CCP fiber laser

由振荡器产生的1080 nm种子激光的功率为100 W,当注入的泵浦激光功率为24.72 kW时,由图1中P1端输出的信号光的最高功率为20.13 kW,此时光转换效率为81.0%。对整个功率范围进行拟合,得到光纤斜率效率为82.3%,结果如图2所示。激光器温度最高部位为DSCCP光纤两端经妥善再涂覆处理

的端面熔接点区域,工作中温度始终低于60 °C,最大温升小于45 °C,DSCCP光纤其余部位的温度均低于50 °C。

图3为实验中通过光谱仪测量得到的不同功率下的P1端输出光谱。在百瓦级种子激光泵浦下,3 dB线宽为0.44 nm;当功率放大到20.13 kW时,光谱的3 dB

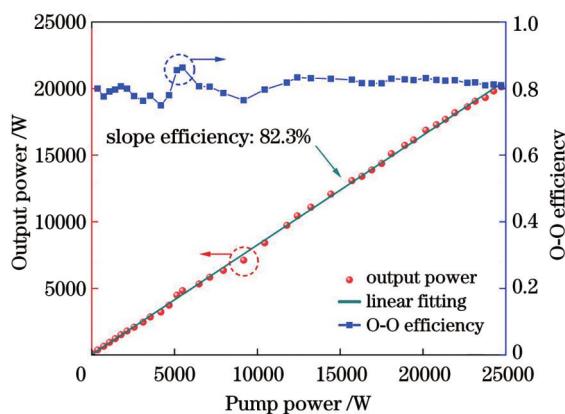


图2 输出功率随注入泵浦功率的变化

Fig. 2 Output power versus injection pump power

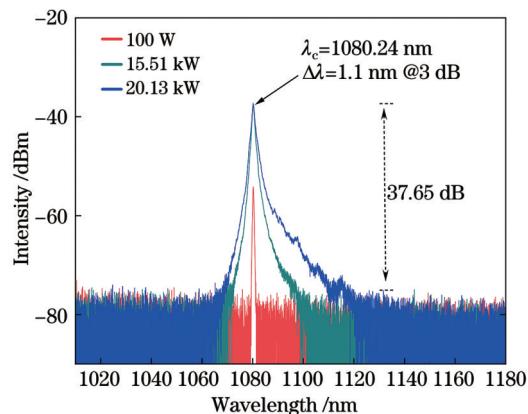


图3 光谱仪测量的输出光谱

Fig. 3 Output spectrum measured by the spectrometer

线宽增至 1.1 nm。由于实验中采用了倾斜光栅阵列和大纤芯尺寸设计,在高功率光谱中未观察到显著的 SRS 效应,拉曼抑制比为 37.65 dB。同时监测了由图 1 中 P2 端输出的残余泵浦功率,其与注入泵浦功率的比值(即残余泵浦比例)随泵浦功率变化如图 4 所示,在最大输出功率下该比值仅为 6% 左右,改善效果明显。

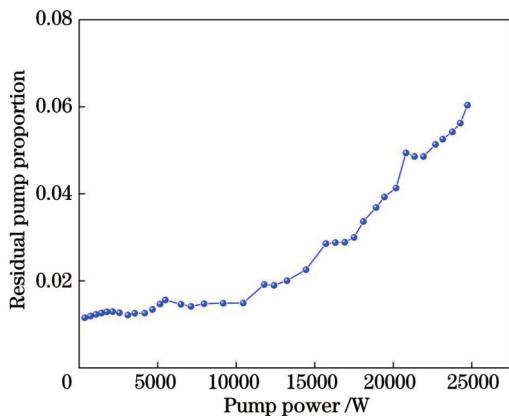


图 4 残余泵浦比例随泵浦功率变化

Fig. 4 Residual pump proportion versus pump power

得益于光纤材料、制备工艺和激光系统集成技术等方面的提升,本次实验基于自研(1+1)型 DS CCP 光纤,在热负载、耦合强度、转换效率以及残余泵浦比例等性能方面得到了较为明显的改善。这是采用(1+1)型 DS CCP 方案实现 20 kW 单纤激光输出的首次公开报道。同时,该结果也验证了 DS CCP 方案实现单纤数十千瓦级功率的可行性。下一阶段的研究重点将集中于特殊结构的纤芯设计和耦合系数的进一步提升,以改善高功率下输出激光的光束质量,实现数十千瓦级近衍射极限高品质激光输出。

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20 kW Laser Output Based on Homemade (1+1) Distributed Side-Coupled Cladding-Pumped Fiber

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Abstract

Objective The distributed side-coupled cladding-pumped (DSCCP) fiber comprises an active signal fiber with gain characteristics and several passive multimode pump fibers, collectively coated to form an integral package. The pump laser injected into the pump fiber couples between the pump and signal fibers in the form of an evanescent wave. Upon entering the signal fiber's cladding, it excites rare-earth ions in the signal fiber's core, thus achieving laser gain amplification. In the realm of high-power single-fiber lasers, the primary challenges limiting power enhancement are pump injection and extremely high thermal loads. Therefore, combining cascaded pumping and distributed side-pumping has emerged as a promising and feasible pathway to achieve ultra-high power in the tens of kilowatts range.

Methods The experimental setup is based on a master oscillator power amplifier scheme. A pair of fiber Bragg gratings and 20/400 μm ytterbium-doped fiber form an optical cavity to generate a hundred-watt seed. A homemade 35 m (1+1) DS CCP fiber with high-concentration Yb-doped in active core and a core/cladding size of 60/300 μm is activated by five groups of 1018 nm pump sources in a counter way from pump core with a core size of 310 μm . A Raman suppression array, consisting of a few homemade tilted fiber Bragg gratings, is placed between the oscillator and the amplifier to filter noise within the Raman range.

Results and Discussions The experimental results demonstrate the highest output power of 20.13 kW from the signal fiber, with an optical-optical conversion efficiency of 81.0%. The fiber slope efficiency, fitted across the entire power range, reaches 82.3%. Spectral measurements exhibit a 3 dB linewidth of 0.44 nm for the seed laser at the hundred-watt level, expanding to 1.1 nm at the amplified power of 20.13 kW. The experiment also reveals a Raman suppression ratio of approximately 37.65 dB, indicating effective suppression of stimulated Raman scattering components in the spectrum.

Conclusions This achievement represents the first publicized report of a 20 kW single-fiber laser output using the (1+1) type distributed side-pumping approach. The success not only highlights the efficacy of the distributed side-pumping scheme for realizing high-power outputs but also paves the way for future research on further improving beam quality and achieving high-quality laser outputs approaching diffraction limits in the tens of kilowatts range. In the next stage, we will focus on the improvement of beam quality by controlling core design and enhancing coupling ability.

Key words fiber optics; high-power fiber lasers; distributed side-coupled cladding-pump; residual pump; stimulated Raman scattering