

基于 Yb:YAG/Cr⁴⁺:YAG/YAG 键合晶体的高峰值功率短脉冲激光器

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摘要: 采用 Yb:YAG/Cr⁴⁺:YAG/YAG 键合晶体搭建了紧凑的端面泵浦被动调 Q 激光器, 获得了高峰值功率的 1 029 nm 短脉冲激光。研究了泵浦功率和初始透过率对脉冲性能的影响及作用机制, 对比发现初始透过率为 85% 的键合晶体, 脉冲性能最好, 在 7.2 W 泵浦功率下, 脉宽短至 3.14 ns, 峰值功率高达 87 kW。另外还研究了输出光谱随功率的变化规律, 发现晶体具有较好的热学性能。这表明, 与无掺杂的同基质晶体键合或者降低可饱和吸收体的初始透过率, 都有助于获取高峰值功率的短脉冲激光输出。

关键词: 固体激光器; 键合晶体; 半导体泵浦; 调 Q; 脉冲

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High-peak-power and short-pulse laser with a Yb:YAG/Cr⁴⁺:YAG/YAG composite crystal

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Abstract: A compact diode-end-pumped passively Q-switched laser was built up with a Yb:YAG/Cr⁴⁺:YAG/YAG composite crystal for generating a high-peak-power and short-pulse laser at 1 029 nm. The affect and mechanism of pump power and initial transmission on output pulsed performances were studied. By experimental comparison, it is found that the composite crystal with initial transmission of 85% gets the best pulsed performances, which the pulse peak power reaches to 87 kW with pulse width of 3.14 ns at incident pump power of 7.2 W. Moreover, variation of output spectrum with incident pump power is studied, which reveals that this composite crystal has good thermal property. Therefore, both bonding nondoped YAG crystal and using low initial transmission can contribute to high-peak-power and short-pulse laser output.

Key words: solid-state lasers; composite crystal; diode-pumped; Q-switched; pulsed

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0 引言

短脉冲、高峰值功率的被动调 Q 固体激光器在光通信、激光微加工、激光点火以及非线性频率转换等领域有着广泛的应用前景^[1-2]。通常被动调 Q 激光器是由激光晶体和 Cr⁴⁺:YAG 可饱和吸收体组成,这就需要两个控温模块分别冷却两块晶体,增加了腔长和损耗。对此,近年来有了可行的解决方法^[3-15],采用热键合技术把激光晶体与同基质的可饱和吸收体复合在一起^[3],相对于分立晶体,键合晶体能够有效地减小谐振腔长度,不仅降低了腔内损耗,而且能压缩脉冲宽度,有利于产生高峰值功率的窄脉冲激光。Nd:YAG 与 Cr⁴⁺:YAG 键合的晶体早已用于产生脉冲 1 μm 基频光^[4-5]、倍频绿光^[6]以及拉曼激光^[7],但由于可饱和吸收体 Cr⁴⁺:YAG 的发热比 Nd:YAG 还严重^[8],加剧了热透镜效应,导致高功率下谐振腔容易失稳,最终难以获得较大的输出功率^[4-5,8,11]。为此,可以将一段未掺杂的 YAG 晶体键合在 Cr⁴⁺:YAG 的末端作为热沉,加快 Cr⁴⁺:YAG 的热量散发,从而有效缓解热透镜效应^[9-15]。2013 年把 65 mm 长的 Nd:YAG/Cr⁴⁺:YAG/YAG 键合晶体棒插入 LD 侧泵系统中,用 KTP 晶体倍频,实现了高功率的脉冲绿色激光,在 187.5 W 的泵浦下平均输出功率高达 27.2 W,且未出现失稳饱和的现象^[11]。这表明,无掺杂的同基质晶体能够大大改善键合晶体的热学性能,提高输出功率,改善光束质量。然而,目前大多数研究集中在 Nd:YAG/Cr⁴⁺:YAG/YAG 键合晶体^[9-14],关于 Yb:YAG/Cr⁴⁺:YAG/YAG 键合晶体的报道却很少^[16-17],相对 Nd:YAG 而言,Yb:YAG 具有吸收带宽宽、荧光寿命长、发射截面大以及量子缺陷低等优势^[18-19],因此有必要对 Yb 键合晶体进行深入研究。

文中采用 Yb:YAG/Cr⁴⁺:YAG/YAG 键合晶体,在紧凑的半导体(LD)端面泵浦谐振腔中,实现了高峰值功率的短脉冲激光输出,并研究了泵浦功率与初始透过率对脉冲性能的影响,以及解释了输出光谱的红移现象。

1 实验装置

基于 Yb:YAG/Cr⁴⁺:YAG/YAG 键合晶体的被动调 Q 激光实验装置如图 1 所示,为紧凑的 LD 端面

泵浦直腔结构,所用的主要器件及谐振腔参数如表 1 所示。泵浦源为光纤耦合输出的半导体激光器(laser diode, LD),耦合光纤的纤芯直径 200 μm,数值孔径 0.22,激光中心波长为 940 nm,与 Yb:YAG 的强吸收峰匹配^[19-21]。泵浦激光通过一对凸透镜组合(焦距比 1:2),聚焦到腔内的激光晶体上。谐振腔由 M1 和 M2 两个平面镜组成,输入镜 M1 两面均镀有对 940 nm 的增透膜,腔内的一面加镀 1 030 nm 的高反射膜。输出镜 M2 在腔内的一面镀有 1 030 nm 的部分反射膜,透过率约为 20%。腔外的平面滤波镜 Flt,用于阻挡泵浦光而只透过 1 μm 的红外激光。

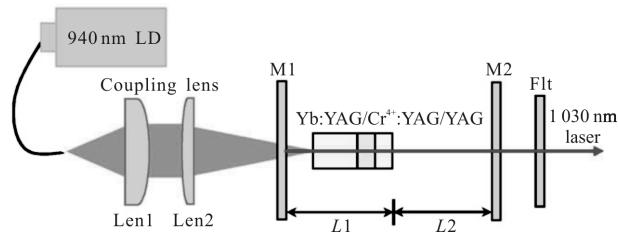


图 1 Yb:YAG/Cr⁴⁺:YAG/YAG 键合晶体激光实验装置图

Fig.1 Experimental configuration of the laser with a Yb:YAG/Cr⁴⁺:YAG/YAG composite crystal

表 1 激光器的主要参数

Tab.1 Main parameters of the laser

	Shape/size/mm	Coating/other parameters
Yb:YAG/ Cr ⁴⁺ :YAG/YAG	4×4×(5+2+2), $T_0=85\%$	AR@940&1 030 nm, 5 at.% Yb-doped
Len1	Focus=25.4	-
Len2	Focus=50	-
M1	Plane	$R_{1030\text{ nm}}>99.8\%$, $T_{940\text{ nm}}>99.7\%$
M2	Plane	$T_{1030\text{ nm}}\approx 20\%$
Flt	Plane	$T_{1030\text{ nm}}>99.5\%$, $R_{940\text{ nm}}>90\%$
L1	12	-
L2	11	-

键合晶体 Yb:YAG/Cr⁴⁺:YAG/YAG 的横截面为 4 mm×4 mm,总长度 9 mm,其中增益介质 Yb:YAG 长 5 mm,5% 的掺镱质量分数,而可饱和吸收体 Cr⁴⁺:YAG 为被动调 Q 的开关,长度 2 mm,85% 的初始透过率(T_0)。另外键合在末端的 YAG 晶体,2 mm 长,用作热沉以改善热性能,这样整块键合晶体只需要一个控温模块,便能同时冷却激光晶体和可饱和吸收

体,不但节约了成本还使腔型变得紧凑,根据 Yb^{3+} 离子的吸收特性与温度的关系,控温系统的设定温度为12℃^[17,21-22]。为了减少对泵浦光和基波的损耗,键合晶体两端面都镀有对波长940 nm和1030 nm的增透膜(antireflection, AR)。

2 实验结果与讨论

实验中用功率计测量了激光器在不同泵浦功率 P_{ip} 下的平均输出功率 P_{av} ,如图2所示, P_{av} 随泵浦呈线性递增,斜率效率为16.5%,在10 W泵浦功率下输出860 mW,且未出现饱和趋势,这归功于键合晶体末端的YAG晶体所起的散热作用^[11]。

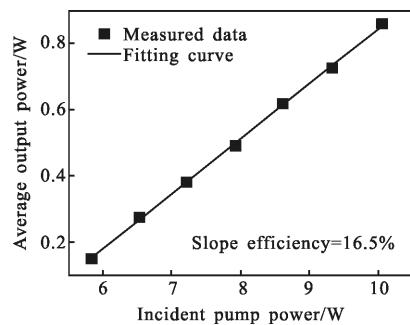


图2 平均输出功率随泵浦功率的变化曲线

Fig.2 Average output power varying with increasing incident pump power

用示波器可捕捉单个脉冲的波形和脉冲序列,如图3所示,由此测得脉冲的重复频率 f_p 和脉冲宽度 τ_h ,然后利用公式 $E=P_{\text{av}}/f_p$ 和 $P_{\text{pk}}=P_{\text{av}}/(f_p \cdot \tau_h)$,便可算出单个脉冲的能量 E 和峰值功率 P_{pk} 。细看图3(b)的脉冲序列,可发现脉冲幅度并不稳定,这是因为谐

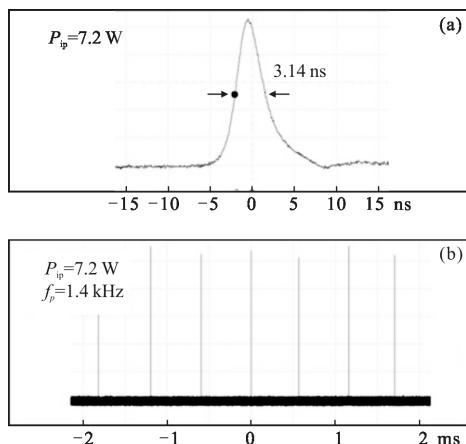


图3 7.2 W 泵浦功率下输出的脉冲波形与脉冲序列

Fig.3 Pulse profile and pulse train at incident pump power of 7.2 W

振腔内包含了多个横模,导致光斑光强的不均匀分布^[12,17],这样可饱和吸收体在横截面上的各点就不能同时被漂白,从而形成了不稳定的脉冲^[23]。

图4给出了输出脉冲的重复频率与泵浦功率的关系,可见,随着泵浦功率的增大,脉冲重复频率近似线性增长,这是因为泵浦功率的增大加速了可饱和吸收体的漂白过程,缩短连续被漂白的时间间隔,从而提高了脉冲的重复频率。当注入泵浦功率增至10 W时,重复频率达2.8 kHz。

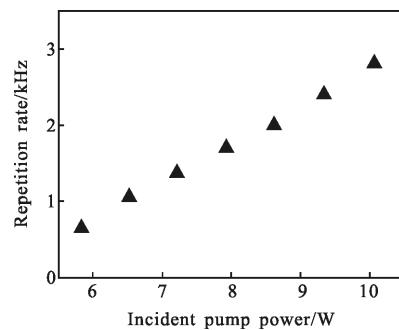


图4 重复频率随泵浦功率的变化

Fig.4 Repetition rate varying with increasing incident pump power

图5为脉冲宽度与泵浦功率的关系图,脉宽很窄,在7.2 W泵浦功率下低至3.14 ns,这正是键合晶体有效缩短腔长的结果,因为缩短腔长能减少腔内光子的往返时间,从而加速脉冲能量的释放,压缩脉宽。另外由图可见,脉冲宽度随泵浦光的变化并不明显,原因是可饱和吸收体的初始透过率决定了饱和阈值,也就是不同泵浦功率下脉冲开启时的腔内光子数基本一样,腔型不变损耗不变的情况下,光子衰减的速度就比较稳定,那么每个脉冲从建立到熄灭的用时和总能量就基本不变,因此脉冲宽度、脉冲能量以及峰值功率基本不随功率而变化。

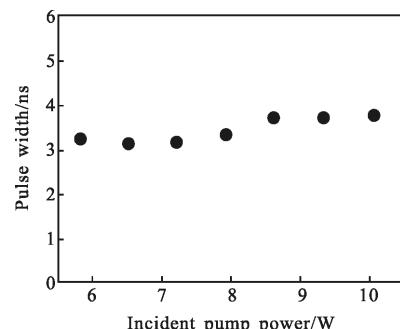


图5 脉冲宽度随泵浦功率的变化

Fig.5 Pulse width varying with increasing incident pump power

图6为随泵浦功率的增加而趋于平稳的峰值功率和脉冲能量曲线,脉冲能量接近300 μJ,然而较短的脉冲宽度却把峰值功率拉高到80 kW以上,当泵浦功率为7.2 W时峰值功率高达87 kW。

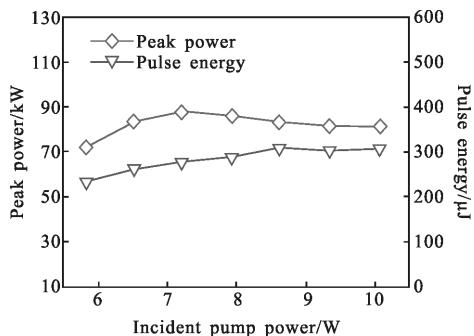


图6 峰值功率和脉冲能量随泵浦功率的变化曲线

Fig.6 Peak power and pulse energy varying with increasing incident pump power

另外,实验对比了三块初始透过率不同(85%、90%、95%)的键合晶体的脉冲性能。结果发现85%的初始透过率对应的脉冲性能最好,脉冲更窄而峰值功率也更高。这是由于初始透过率越低,腔内损耗越大,激光阈值越高,那么要触发脉冲就需要激光晶体积累更多的反转粒子数,耗时更长,这不但降低了重复频率,同时更多的反转粒子数还会引发更强烈的雪崩式跃迁,更短的时间内输出更高能量的激光脉冲,所以,脉冲宽度就会更窄,而峰值功率则更高。

使用分辨率为0.27 nm的光谱仪(SOLAR S100),测量了不同泵浦功率下的输出光谱,如图7所示。泵

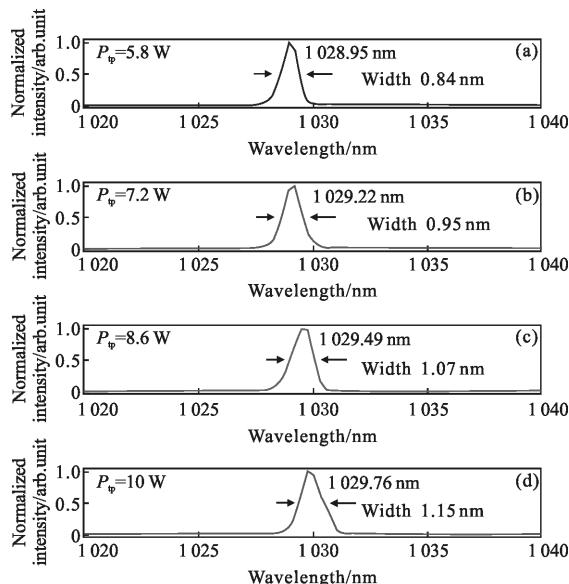


图7 不同泵浦功率下的激光光谱

Fig.7 Optical spectrum at different incident pump powers

浦功率从5.8 W升至10 W,对应光谱中心波长由1028.95 nm红移到1029.76 nm,而光谱宽度则由0.84 nm展宽至1.15 nm。这是由于Yb:YAG晶体的发射光谱与温度有关,泵浦功率越大温度越高,激光的中心波长就会往长波方向偏移,伴随着光谱宽度的轻微展宽^[16,22]。

3 结论

采用半导体激光器从端面抽运Yb:YAG/Cr⁴⁺:YAG/YAG键合晶体,在紧凑的直腔中实现了1029 nm的激光振荡,成功输出高峰值功率的短脉冲激光。实验研究了泵浦功率和初始透过率对脉冲性能的影响,对比发现初始透过率为85%的键合晶体,脉冲性能最好,在7.2 W泵浦功率下,脉宽短至3.14 ns,峰值功率高达87 kW。最后还研究了输出光谱的红移与展宽现象。

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