IX-B Development and Research of Advanced Tunable Solid State Lasers

Diode-pumped solid-state lasers can provide excellent spatial mode quality and narrow linewidths. The high spectral power brightness of these lasers has allowed high efficiency frequency extension by nonlinear frequency conversion. Moreover, the availability of new and improved nonlinear optical crystals makes these techniques more practical. Additionally, quasi phase matching (QPM) is a new technique instead of conventional birefringent phase matching for compensating phase velocity dispersion in frequency conversion. These kinds of advanced tunable solid-state light sources, so to speak “Chroma Chip Lasers,” will assist the research of molecular science.

In this projects we are developing Chroma Chip Lasers based on diode-pumped-microchip-solid-state lasers and advanced nonlinear frequency conversion technique.

IX-B-1 Saturation Factors of Pump Absorption in Solid-State Lasers

SATO, Yoichi; TAIRA, Takunori


The precise formulation of the absorption coefficient is investigated, where the saturation factors of absorption for solid-state lasers are defined as depending on the pumping scheme. We also investigated theoretical and experimental evaluations of the pump saturation effect in Nd:YVO₄ as an example, and proved the accuracy of this model describing the saturation effect (Figure 1), and the clipping of this effect by laser oscillation (Figure 2). This paper points out the following: even in the case of 1 μm oscillation in neodymium lasers, the selection of pump wavelength results in not only the different absorption cross sections, but also the different characteristics in the saturation of the pump absorption. This influence is especially important in the laser media with a large cross section, such as Nd:YVO₄. For example, in the direct pumping into the emitting levels ⁴F₃/₂, the electrons in the laser upper level also connect to the stimulated emission to the ground state, which should not be observed in the conventional pumping into ⁴F₅/₂ because of little distribution of the electrons in the ⁴F₅/₂.

Figure 1. Absorption coefficient of 1 at.% Nd:YVO₄ in π-polarization as a function of pumping intensity.

Figure 2. Absorption coefficient of 1 at.% Nd:YVO₄ in π-polarization under lasing condition.

IX-B-2 Spectroscopic Properties and Laser Operation of Nd:Y₃ScAl₄O₁₂ Polycrystalline Gain Media, Solid-Solution of Nd:Y₃Al₅O₁₂ and Nd:Y₃Sc₂Al₃O₁₂ Ceramics

SATO, Yoichi; SAIKAWA, Jiro; SHOJI, Ichiro; TAIRA, Takunori; IKESUE, Akio


Transparent Nd³⁺-doped Y₃ScAl₄O₁₂ (Nd:Y₃ScAl₄O₁₂) ceramics with up to 5.0-at.% Nd³⁺-concentration (Cₙd) were fabricated by a solid-state reaction method using commercial 4N powders. Spectroscopic properties of this media, such as absorption and emission spectra, the fluorescence lifetime, and the influence of increasing Cₙd on these characteristics are discussed. It is shown that high absorption efficiency of the pump radiation that is necessary for efficient operation of a Nd:Y₃ScAl₄O₁₂ microchip laser can be obtained by increasing Cₙd. One-micron laser operation with 113-mW output power (7.7% optical-to-optical overall efficiency) and 9.6% slope efficiency was demonstrated from a 1.0-mm thick, 5.0-at.% Nd:Y₃ScAl₄O₁₂ uncoated sample under 808-nm pumping by a Ti:Sapphire laser (Figure 1). Further works are directed toward optimization of the fabricating process in order to reduce the optical losses that are found to increase with increasing Cₙd.
IX-B-3 High Energy Optical Parametric Oscillation Using 3-mm-Thick Periodically Poled MgO:LiNbO3

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[Conf. Lasers Electro-Optics CTuA3 (2004)]

We presented high energy optical parametric oscillation (OPO) using 3-mm-thick periodically poled MgO:LiNbO3 (PPMgLN) device. Multipulses of ~10 kV were applied to the crystal at elevated temperature of ~100 °C to fabricate the PPMgLN device.

For OPO experiments, a Q-switched Nd:YAG laser (Spectra-Physics, LAB-170-30) was used as a pump source. The repetition rate was 30 Hz with the pulse width of 15 ns. The cavity length of single resonant OPO was fixed to 35 mm. The 1/e²-diameter of pump beam was set to 2.2 mm. Figure 1 shows the dependence of OPO output energy on input pump energy. The pump threshold was ~3 mJ, and the slope efficiency was 51% for total output (signal of 1.82 µm, idler of 2.56 µm) and 28% for the signal wave only. The maximum total output energy of 22 mJ at the pump energy of 46 mJ was obtained without photorefractive damages. This is the highest energy obtained from QPM-OPO operation using a PPMgLN device even at room temperature. The large-aperture PPMgLN devices would enable us to realize high-energy wavelength conversion, short pulse amplification, and pulse compression.

IX-B-4 Basic Enhancement of the Overall Optical Efficiency of Intracavity Frequency-Doubling Devices for the One-Micron Continuous-Wave Nd:Y₃Al₅O₁₂ Laser Emission

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Frequency-doubling of the efficient one-micron $^2F_{3/2} \rightarrow ^4I_{11/2}$ Nd$^{3+}$ lasers is currently the most used method to obtain light into the green region. If the intracavity frequency-doubling method is considered, the laser active material and a nonlinear crystal designed for phase matching conditions are placed in a laser resonator that confines the beam at the fundamental frequency $\omega$ inside the resonator, passes it through the doubling crystal and out-couples the frequency-doubled $2\omega$ beam. The second-harmonic (SH) power $P_{2\omega}$ is determined by the intracavity emission intensity of the active material $I_{\omega,\text{int}}$ and by the characteristics of the doubling crystal

$$P_{2\omega} \sim I_{\omega,\text{int}}^{1/2} \frac{d_{\text{eff}}}{l} \ell^2 \left( \frac{n_1}{n_2} \right)^2$$

where $d_{\text{eff}}$ is the effective nonlinear coefficient along the phase matching direction, $l$ is the length of the nonlinear crystal and $n_1$ and $n_2$ are the refractive indices at the fundamental and SH wavelengths, respectively. The overall optical-to-optical efficiency of such a laser, i.e. the output power $P_{2\omega}$ obtained for a given pump power $P_{\omega}$, where $j = i$ denotes the pump power incident on the laser material and $j = ab$ denotes the absorbed power, can be optimized acting on these factors. In this work we discuss the possibility of basic enhancement of the overall optical-to-optical efficiency of intracavity frequency-doubling devices for the one-micron continuous-wave Nd lasers by direct pumping into the emitting level and by using concentrated laser materials.

The continuous wave (CW) Nd lasers are usually pumped using the strong absorption Nd$^{3+}$ lines to energy levels placed above the emitting level $^4F_{3/2}$ and the absorbed excitation relaxes to the emitting level through electron-phonon interactions. Thus, the upper
quantum defect between the pump level and the emitting level reduces the performances of the laser emission and contributes to the generation of heat. The upper quantum defect can be eliminated by pumping directly into the emitting level $^{4}F_{3/2}$: this modality of pumping was suggested in the first work on semiconductor diode excitation of Nd$^{3+}$ emission$^{[3]}$ and it was used in the first diode laser pumped Nd:YAG both in transverse and end-pumped configurations$^{[2,3]}$. However, owing to the weak absorption into the level $^{4}F_{3/2}$ of Nd$^{3+}$ in YAG, this was soon replaced by diode laser pumping at 808 nm into the strongly absorbing level $^{4}F_{5/2}$. The direct pumping of CW Nd lasers into the emitting level was reconsidered recently for Nd: YAG crystals and ceramics$^{[4,5]}$ as well as for other laser materials, such as Nd:YVO$_4$ and Nd:GdCa$_2$O$_{12}$ (BO$_3$)$_3$.\(^7\)

A problem of concern in using the direct pumping into the emitting level is the low absorption $\eta_a$ in some of the important laser materials, including Nd:YAG, for concentrations $C_{Nd}$ around 1-at.\% Nd that are traditionally used for construction of lasers. This could be overcome by using more concentrated materials. By estimating the quantum efficiency $\eta_{qe}$ using the energy transfer data at low inversion, specific to the CW Nd: YAG laser, it was shown that the product $\eta_a \cdot \eta_{qe}$ increases with $C_{Nd}$ up to a critical value then decreases again.\(^5\) The range of $C_{Nd}$ for which this product is larger than for 1-at.\% Nd could be quite wide: up to 8.0-at.\% for Nd:YAG and up to 3.0-at.\% for Nd:YVO$_4$. Thus, working at the upper $C_{Nd}$ limit would benefit both from a low threshold and from increased slope efficiency.

According to Eq. (1), the enhancement of the laser emission parameters at the frequency $\omega$ by direct pumping will be accentuated in the frequency-doubling device, resulting in a lower threshold for the SH emission and in a stronger dependence on the absorbed pump power. These concepts are investigated in this work by using 1.0-at.\% and 2.4-at.\% Nd:YAG crystals.

The frequency doubling is investigated with a V-type folded laser resonator (Figure 1). The 3-mm long Nd:YAG crystals were coated as anti-reflection for 1064 nm and high transmission for 808 and 885 nm. A Ti:Sapphire laser whose radiation was focused into the crystals in a spot of 50-µm diameter was used for pumping. The M1 to M2 resonator arm is 70-mm long and contains also a Brewster glass plate (BP) to polarize the beam. The length of the M2 to M3 frequency-doubling arm was 55 mm and houses a 10-mm long LBO nonlinear crystal designed for type I critical phase matching condition ($\theta = 90^\circ$, $\phi = 11.4^\circ$) at 25 °C.

The 532-nm output power for the 1.0-at.\% Nd:YAG crystal is shown in Figure 2. The threshold of green radiation is greatly reduced at 885 compared to 808-nm pumping (26 and respectively 50 mW), while the dependence on the absorbed power is enhanced. Moreover, the emission under 808-nm pumping shows signs of saturation induced by thermal effects in Nd:YAG for green emission larger than ~14 mW. The 532-nm emission under 885-nm pumping does not show such behavior even at the 20 mW obtained for the available absorbed power. As indicated by Figure 3a, the use of a more concentrated (2.4-at.\% Nd) active crystal improves the 885-nm pump absorption efficiency, but increases the emission threshold in absorbed power, without changing the slope efficiency. However, the SH power obtained with this sample for a given incident power is larger (Figure 3b). Further improvement could be obtained with a longer active laser crystal and/or a higher $C_{Nd}$.

In conclusion this work demonstrates the advantages of using direct pumping into the emitting level and of more concentrated laser materials in intracavity frequency-doubling devices based on the 1064-nm CW laser emission of Nd:YAG. The improvement of emission parameters is accompanied by a drastically reduction of generation of heat that could enable scaling to higher emission powers. This approach could be particularly important for laser materials with higher absorption cross-section for the direct pumping.

References


![Figure 1. Schematic of the V-type resonator used in intracavity frequency-doubling experiments.](image)

![Figure 2. Green power vs. absorbed power for the 1.0-at.\% Nd:YAG crystal under 808 and 885-nm pumping.](image)
IX-B-5 High-Power Blue Generation from a Periodically Poled MgO:LiNbO3 Ridge-Type Waveguide by Frequency Doubling of a Diode End-Pumped Nd:Y3Al5O12 Laser

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Continuous-wave (CW) blue laser radiation is of interest for various applications, such as display technologies, obtaining of high-density optical disk systems, high-resolution printing, or biological application. In order to obtain the blue light at 473 nm, the second-harmonic generation (SHG) of the $^4I_9/2 \rightarrow ^4I_{10}/2$ transition at 946 nm of Nd$^{3+}$:Y$_3$Al$_5$O$_{12}$ (Nd:YAG) can be used. An attractive method to realize a compact blue-light source is SHG by quasi-phase matching (QPM) interaction: LiNbO$_3$ (LN), LiTaO$_3$ and KTiOPO$_4$ are in present widely known and used for fabricating of QPM devices. CW blue light at 473 nm of 81 mW was generated for a fundamental laser power of 1.13 W in a 15-mm-long periodically poled (PP) MgO:LN that operated at an elevated temperature of 140 °C. $^1$) When using a PP MgO:LN substrate (3°-off X-cut) by the 2D high-voltage application technique (Figure 1a), a resin adhesive was used to glue the obtained comb-electrode-formed surface to a LN substrate (Figure 1b). In the next step (Figure 1c) the MgO:LN was thinned by flat-grinding and surface polishing; thus, a 4 µm-thick planar waveguide was realized. In the final step (Figure 1d), the ridge-shaped structure was processed by machining to form a ridge-type waveguide.

A sketch of the experimental set-up is presented in Figure 2. The fundamental 946-nm radiation for frequency doubling was provided by a home-made Nd:YAG laser. For an absorbed pump power at 809 nm of 4.2 W the polarized output was 1.1 W in a Gaussian distribution ($M^2 = 1.05$); the slope efficiency was 38%. Three periodically poled MgO:LN ridge-type waveguides, each of 1.4 mm-width, were prepared. First one has 8.5-mm length and both the input and output surfaces were cut at an angle $\alpha = 10^\circ$ and AR coated at 946 nm by SiO$_2$ monolayer. The second one of 6-mm length has the input and output surfaces cut at $\alpha = 10^\circ$, while the third one has 12-mm length and only the input surface cut at $\alpha = 6^\circ$; these two samples have no coating at 946 nm. No coating was provided at 473 nm for all the waveguides. The MgO:LN ridge-type waveguide was placed on an aluminum plate whose temperature was controlled within 0.1 °C accuracy.

The 473-nm power as a function of the 946-nm power coupled into the waveguide is presented in Figure 3. The maximum blue power of 189 mW was obtained for the 8.5-mm-long MgO:LN waveguide with a conversion efficiency of 49%. If the Fresnel loss on the waveguide output surface is considered, the maximum internal blue-light power is 222 mW, corresponding to a conversion efficiency of 58%. As the fundamental power before the waveguide was 670 mW the overall conversion efficiency is 28%; improving the 946 nm radiation coupling efficiency into the waveguide could increase the device overall efficiency. The maximum blue power for the 6-mm-long MgO:LN waveguide was 155 mW with 42% conversion efficiency (182-mW blue...
internal power with 49% conversion efficiency), while 147 mW with a conversion efficiency of 48% (173-mW blue internal power with 56% conversion efficiency) were obtained for the 12-mm-long MgO:LN waveguide. The highest conversion efficiency of 63% (internal conversion efficiency of 74%) was obtained for a blue power of 99 mW from the longest waveguide used in experiments. During an hour measurement, the peak-to-peak fluctuations for the 946-nm maximum power were ±1.3%, while the blue power fluctuations were ±4.0%. The phase matching temperature was 36.3 °C and the measured acceptance bandwidth ∆T was 2.3 °C, in very good agreement with the predicted theoretical value of 2.35 °C.

In conclusion, CW blue-light generation from a periodically poled MgO:LiNbO₃ waveguide by frequency-doubling of a diode end-pumped Nd:YAG laser operating at 946 nm is reported. The maximum output power at 473 nm was 189 mW with 49% conversion efficiency (222 mW internal power with 58% conversion efficiency), indicating the potential for high-power SHG of the ridge-type waveguide fabricated by ultra-precision machining.

References

Figure 1. Fabrication steps of a periodically poled MgO:LN ridge-type waveguide by ultra-precision machining: (a) obtaining of the domain-inverted regions, (b) adhesion with a LN substrate, (c) flat grinding and polishing, and (d) ultra-precision grinding.

Figure 2. Schematic diagram of the experimental set-up. P: polarizer; L1: focusing lens; L2: collimating lens; F: 946-nm cut filter.

Figure 3. Output power at 473 nm versus the 946-nm power coupled into the waveguide. The inset shows a typical blue light far-field distribution.

IX-B-6 High-Power Continuous Wave Green Generation by Single-Pass Frequency Doubling of a Nd:GdVO₄ Laser in a Periodically Poled MgO:LiNbO₃ Operating at Room Temperature
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Due to its high effective nonlinear coefficient and the possibility of obtaining non-critical phase matching in single-pass continuous wave (CW) pumping scheme, the periodically poled LiNbO₃ (PPLN) crystal continues to attract a great interest as a QPM device for generation in blue, green, or violet ranges. Employing a 50-mm-long first-order PPLN sample, CW powers of 2.7-W green¹ and 60-mW blue² were demonstrated, respectively. It is known, however, that PPLN has significant problems for visible light radiation, such as green-induced infrared absorption and optical damage. Although phase matching at high temperature close of 200 °C was used,² power instabilities and thermal lens effects could not be completely suppressed. Thus, to date, room temperature CW operation close or in excess of 1 W level was not obtained from a single-pass pumped PPLN crystal.

In order to overcome these problems, it was recently proposed³ to utilize periodically poled MgO:LiNbO₃...
PPMgLN (PPMgLN). Due to its larger nonlinear susceptibilities, higher resistance against photorefractive damage and shorter wavelength transparency compared with PPLN, PPMgLN is a very attractive material for generation of visible light through SHG by QPM process. Moreover, because of its low coercive field, it was demonstrated that PPMgLN could be fairly easily fabricated by means of electric field poling. Recently, a novel high-voltage multi-pulse poling technique that suppress the penetration of poled region and produces uniform PPMgLN with domain period (Λ) as short as 1.4 μm was developed by our group. This letter reports CW SHG at room temperature in a first-order PPMgLN with Λ = 6.95 mm that was fabricated by this technique.

In order to improve the domain pattern quality for short periodic structure a special attention was paid to understand the domain formation processes in a z-cut MgLN crystal. A large resistance reduction was found in a 0.5-mm-thick z-cut MgLN during a conventional electric-field-poling process. Large leakage current was observed in the electric circuit after poling process, which was explained by the resistance reduction in the poled region from 6 × 10^11 to 7 × 10^9 Ω-mm. This large resistance reduction may cause irregular side growth and non-uniformity of polarization inversion that, in turn, interrupts the fabrication of short-periodic structures. Such local penetrations under the electrode may shorten the surface and bottom electrodes and cause large leakage current between electrodes, which degrade uniformity of electric field. Then, in order to realize uniform PPMgLN structure over large areas, local penetration of polarization-inverted regions must be suppressed: a thick crystal and the multi-pulse application method are used to overcome this last problem. The penetration of polarization inversion to the bottom of the crystal could be suppressed by employing thick samples. Shortening the growth time by using short width pulse would control the forward growth, while multiple pulses should supply enough charge for realizing a relatively deep polarization-inverted structure. Figure 1 shows the cross-sectional of the PPMgLN with Λ = 6.95 mm for various depths: the structure presents 50% duty cycle from the +Z surface to a depth of ~300 μm and uniform periodicity was maintained from the surface to ~800-μm depth. The 1063-nm radiation for frequency doubling was provided by a home-made diode end-pumped Nd: GdVO4 laser that delivers CW 6.8 W output power (M2 factor of 1.16) for an 808-nm pump power measured at the fiber end of 15.1 W; the slope efficiency was 57%. The output beam depolarization ratio was 1.2% and the power fluctuation during few hours of operation was ±1.1%. For SHG experiments a 10-mm length PPMgLN was used: the PPMgLN end-faces were optically polished and anti-reflection (AR) coated by SiO2 monolayer for the 1063-nm fundamental wavelength; no coating was provided at 531 nm. The PPMgLN was placed on an aluminum plate whose temperature was controlled within 0.1 °C accuracy with a thermoelectric cooler. The 1063-nm radiation was focused into PPMgLN to a spot size of 17-μm radius.

Figure 2 shows the 531-nm green power after PPMgLN versus the 1063-nm fundamental power measured after the focusing lens. The maximum green power of 0.89 W was obtained for an infrared incident power of 6.23 W, resulting a conversion efficiency of 14.3%. If the Fresnel loss (determined as ~14%) on the output surface is considered the maximum internal green-light power results as 1.03 W, corresponding to a conversion efficiency of 16.5%. The effective nonlinear coefficient was determined as 14 pm/V and the normalized conversion efficiency including the Fresnel loss by reflection was 2.7%/W. Figure 2 shows by continuous line the theoretical modeling using a quadratic relation with this value: a good agreement with the experimental results is observed. The phase matching temperature was 29.5 °C, stable within ±0.3 °C on the entire pumping range.

In conclusion, irregular side growth of polarization inversion was suppressed in a 2-mm thick PPMgLN by using a multi-pulse application poling method. Uniform periodicity and 50% duty cycle with a 6.95-μm domain period was fabricated on 10-mm length of interaction. This structure was used to obtain perfect first-order QPM in the bulk PPMgLN at 1063 nm wavelength: CW 531-nm green light of 0.89 W with 14.2% power conversion efficiency was obtained (internal power of 1.03 W and 16.5% conversion efficiency) in a single-pass pumping with a Nd:GdVO4 laser.

References

Figure 1. Cross-sectional view (Y face) of first-order PPMgLN with Λ = 6.95 μm: (a) general view, (b) near the surface, (c) at the depth of 300 μm, and (d) at 1-mm depth.
During the past few years much work has been done in order to obtain an efficient and simple solid-state blue laser source, this device being of interest for applications such as display technologies, production of high-density optical disk systems, high-resolution printing, or medical diagnostics. Although the blue semiconductor diode laser is expected to reach the power level necessary for these applications, the frequency-doubling of the 946-nm \( \text{Nd:YAG} \) laser is a practical and the most used way that leads to blue radiation at 473 nm. Various resonator configurations and nonlinear crystals could be used for frequency-doubling of a \( \text{Nd:YAG} \) laser operating at 946 nm. The first continuous-wave (CW) diode-pumped \( \text{Nd:YAG} \) laser that delivered 42-mW at 946 nm was reported by Risk and Lendth,\(^{1}\) whereas an attempt of frequency-doubling of the 946-nm \( \text{4F}\_{3/2} \rightarrow \text{4I}\_{9/2} \) transition in \( \text{Nd:YAG} \) yielded 100 µW of blue light. Dixon \textit{et al.} developed the first 946-nm \( \text{Nd:YAG} \) laser intracavity frequency-doubling by a \( \text{KNbO}_3 \) crystal;\(^{2}\) at 1.0-mm thickness the maximum blue output power with a powermeter results in \( \pm 2\% \) power fluctuations during few hours of operation. The \( \text{KNbO}_3 \) crystals was observed during the experiments. Some disadvantages of \( \text{KNbO}_3 \) are a small temperature and spectral acceptance bandwidths, photorefractive effect, and that its domain structure is easily disturbed. However, because of its high value of the nonlinear coefficient and due to its ability to be bi-refringently phase-matched for second harmonic generation of the 946-nm wavelength this crystal was our choice. This paper reports on our work toward scaling blue light obtained by intracavity frequency-doubling of a diode end-pumped 946-nm \( \text{Nd:YAG} \) laser, using a \( \text{KNbO}_3 \) nonlinear crystal.

A 1.0-at.\%- \( \text{Nd:YAG} \) crystal (3-mm thickness) whose surfaces were anti-reflection (AR) coated at the pumping wavelength of 809 nm and also at 946 and 1064 nm was used in experiments. To achieve efficient heat removal the \( \text{Nd:YAG} \) crystal was placed in a copper mount whose temperature was kept at 12 °C, and an indium foil was used to improve the thermal contact between the \( \text{Nd:YAG} \) and the copper heat sink. A 400-µm diameter, 0.22-NA fiber-coupled diode (HLU32 F400, LIMO Co., Germany) was used for CW pumping: the fiber was imaged into the \( \text{Nd:YAG} \) crystal in a 300-µm diameter spot. Two \( \text{KNbO}_3 \) crystals (Mitsui Chemicals Inc., Japan) of 1.0 and 2.0-mm thickness were cut for type I, critical-phase-matching condition (\( \theta = 90^\circ, \phi = 59.2^\circ \)) and placed in a copper holder whose temperature was controlled with 0.1 °C accuracy; the operation temperature was 29.2 °C. Both sides of each \( \text{KNbO}_3 \) were polished to parallel flat surfaces and AR coated at 473 and 946 nm.

The emission of a plane-concave resonator of 70-mm length that contains the \( \text{Nd:YAG} \) crystal, the polarizing glass plate and the \( \text{KNbO}_3 \) crystal was first investigated. The output mirror has 100-mm radius and it was coated as high-reflection at 946 nm and high-transmission at 473 nm. The maximum power at 473-nm for the 1.0-mm thick \( \text{KNbO}_3 \) crystal was 68 mW for an absorbed pump power of 3.1 W, as shown in Figure 1. The conversion of the available IR power was 10.5%. With the 2.0-mm thick \( \text{KNbO}_3 \) crystal the maximum blue power was 159 mW for an absorbed pump power of 3.3 W: thus \( \eta_{\text{bl}} = 2.7\% \), while the conversion of the blue power was determined as 21.4%. For these points of operation the transverse mode distribution was Gaussian \( (\text{M}^2 < 1.05) \), but a saturation of the blue power and decrease of the beam quality were obtained as the pump power was further increased.

In order to increase the blue power a V-type resonator, as shown in Figure 2, was designed. The distances M1 to M2 and M2 to M3 were 70 and 55 mm, respectively: the \( \text{KNbO}_3 \) nonlinear crystal was placed very close of mirror M3. Figure 3 shows the blue power versus the absorbed pump power. For the 1.0-mm thick \( \text{KNbO}_3 \) crystal a maximum blue power of 318 mW was obtained for an absorbed pump power of 3.8 W; the conversion efficiency of the IR power was 34.2%. An output power of 418 mW at 473 nm was recorded for the 2.0-mm thick \( \text{KNbO}_3 \) crystal with \( \eta_{\text{bl}} = 6.7\% \); the conversion of the available IR power was 50%. The 473-nm output beam was linearly polarized \(( > 1:10^3)\) and orthogonal to the 946-nm radiation. Monitoring the maximum blue output power with a powermeter resulted in \( \pm 2\% \) power fluctuations during few hours of operation. The stability on millisecond time scale was investigated with a fast photodiode: it shows no fluctuations, indicating no blue problem. No damage of the \( \text{KNbO}_3 \) crystals was observed during the experiments.

For modeling of blue power, the beam distribution inside the resonator was considered independent of the

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**Figure 2.** CW 531-nm output power (■-measured and □-corrected with Fresnel losses) and phase matching temperature (○) vs. the 1063-nm incident power.

**IX-B-7 Continuous-Wave High-Power Nd:YAG-KNbO\(_3\) Laser at 473 nm**

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During the past few years much work has been done in order to obtain an efficient and simple solid-state blue laser source, this device being of interest for applications such as display technologies, production of high-density optical disk systems, high-resolution printing, or medical diagnostics. Although the blue semiconductor diode laser is expected to reach the power level necessary for these applications, the frequency-doubling of the 946-nm \( \text{Nd:YAG} \) laser is a practical and the most used way that leads to blue radiation at 473 nm. Various resonator configurations and nonlinear crystals could be used for frequency-doubling of a \( \text{Nd:YAG} \) laser operating at 946 nm. The first continuous-wave (CW) diode-pumped \( \text{Nd:YAG} \) laser that delivered 42-mW at 946 nm was reported by Risk and Lendth,\(^{1}\) whereas an attempt of frequency-doubling of the 946-nm \( \text{4F}\_{3/2} \rightarrow \text{4I}\_{9/2} \) transition in \( \text{Nd:YAG} \) yielded 100 µW of blue light. Dixon \textit{et al.} developed the first 946-nm \( \text{Nd:YAG} \) laser intracavity frequency-doubling by a \( \text{KNbO}_3 \) crystal;\(^{2}\) at 1.0-mm thickness the maximum blue output power was 159 mW for an absorbed pump power of 3.3 W: thus \( \eta_{\text{bl}} = 2.7\% \), while the conversion of the blue power was determined as 21.4%. For these points of operation the transverse mode distribution was Gaussian \( (\text{M}^2 < 1.05) \), but a saturation of the blue power and decrease of the beam quality were obtained as the pump power was further increased.

In order to increase the blue power a V-type resonator, as shown in Figure 2, was designed. The distances M1 to M2 and M2 to M3 were 70 and 55 mm, respectively: the \( \text{KNbO}_3 \) nonlinear crystal was placed very close of mirror M3. Figure 3 shows the blue power versus the absorbed pump power. For the 1.0-mm thick \( \text{KNbO}_3 \) crystal a maximum blue power of 318 mW was obtained for an absorbed pump power of 3.8 W; the conversion efficiency of the IR power was 34.2%. An output power of 418 mW at 473 nm was recorded for the 2.0-mm thick \( \text{KNbO}_3 \) crystal with \( \eta_{\text{bl}} = 6.7\% \); the conversion of the available IR power was 50%. The 473-nm output beam was linearly polarized \(( > 1:10^3)\) and orthogonal to the 946-nm radiation. Monitoring the maximum blue output power with a powermeter resulted in \( \pm 2\% \) power fluctuations during few hours of operation. The stability on millisecond time scale was investigated with a fast photodiode: it shows no fluctuations, indicating no blue problem. No damage of the \( \text{KNbO}_3 \) crystals was observed during the experiments.

For modeling of blue power, the beam distribution inside the resonator was considered independent of the
active medium refractive power induced by optical pumping, with the laser operating far of the threshold.\textsuperscript{5,6}) Experimentally we have determined the pump coupling coefficient $K_c = 0.032 \text{ W}^{-1}$ and the loss $L$ as $\sim 1.5\%$ and $\sim 2.0\%$ for the resonators with the 1.0 and 2.0-mm thick KNbO$_3$, respectively. The beam radius in the Nd:YAG and in KNbO$_3$ were considered independent of the absorbed power, namely 140 and 100 $\mu$m, respectively. Figure 3 also shows by continuous lines the modeling of the blue power using this model, where $d_{\text{eff}} = 13 \text{ pm/V}$ was the parameter used for fitting. The agreement between the experimental data and modeling is satisfactory, if one considers that the model assumes that the resonator parameters are optimized for each pump power, which is not the experimental case.

In conclusion, a continuous-wave diode-pumped Nd:YAG laser that operates on the 946-nm $^4F_{3/2} \rightarrow ^4I_{9/2}$ transition and that is intracavity frequency-doubled to 473 nm using KNbO$_3$ nonlinear crystal is described. The blue maximum power was 418 mW, with 50\% conversion of the available IR power, and the optical-to-optical conversion efficiency with respect to the pump power was 6.7\%. To the best authors knowledge these are the highest results to date for a diode pumped Nd:YAG rod laser frequency-doubled by a KNbO$_3$ nonlinear crystal.

References

Figure 1. Blue output power vs. the absorbed pump power for the linear resonator.

Figure 2. V-type resonator of the diode-pumped 946-nm Nd:YAG laser intracavity frequency-doubled by KNbO$_3$ crystal; BP: glass plate placed at the Brewster angle.

Figure 3. Blue output power vs. the absorbed pump power for the V-type resonator: signs for experiments and theory by the continuous lines.

IX-B-8 Room-Temperature, Continuous-Wave 1-W Green Power by Single-Pass Frequency Doubling in a Bulk Periodically Poled MgO:LiNbO$_3$ Crystal

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Due to its significant advantages of phase-matching an arbitrary wavelength and of accessing high nonlinear coefficient by using an appropriate period of polarization inversion, the second-harmonic generation (SHG) by quasi-phase-matching (QPM) interaction is an attractive method to obtain a compact and high power laser emitting into visible or ultraviolet spectral regions. Because of its simplicity, the single-pass SHG scheme is a solution to obtain continuous wave (CW) operation in blue, green, or ultraviolet ranges. This scheme requires a high nonlinear coefficient and long interaction length with noncritical phase matching: these conditions are well fulfilled by the periodically poled LiNbO$_3$ (PPLN) crystal. It is known, however, that PPLN has significant problems for visible light radiation, such as green- or blue-induced infrared absorption and optical damage. Although phase matching at high temperature of 200 °C\textsuperscript{1} or 140 °C\textsuperscript{2} was used, power instabilities and thermal lens effects could not be completely suppressed.
To overcome these problems, the use of periodically poled MgO:LiNbO₃ (PPMgLN) was proposed; this crystal presents larger nonlinear susceptibilities, higher resistance against photorefractive damage and shorter wavelength transparency compared with PPLN. CW blue power of 17.3 mW at 426 nm was demonstrated from a PPMgLN waveguide that was single-pass pumped by a AlGaAs diode laser. A novel high-voltage multi-pulse poling technique that suppress the penetration of poled region and produces uniform voltage multi-pulse poling technique that suppress the maximum internal green-light power results as 1.03 W, corresponding to a conversion efficiency of 16.5%. Figure 2a shows the internal green power and conversion efficiency versus the 1063-nm input power in PPMgLN. The effective nonlinear coefficient was determined as 14 pm/V; thus, the normalized conversion efficiency including the Fresnel loss by reflection was 3.0%/W. For the 25-mm long PPMgLN crystal a maximum green power of 1.18 W was measured. When the Fresnel loss is considered (Figure 2b) the internal power and conversion efficiency were 1.38 W and 19.6%, respectively, while the normalized conversion efficiency was ~3.3%/W; the continuous line of Figure 2b shows the expected results with this value.

The experimental set-up is shown schematically in Figure 1. Taking into account the high thermal conductivity of Nd:GdVO₄ and the fact that the output beam is polarized, a diode-end pumped Nd:GdVO₄ laser (Z-type resonator) was build as a pump source: the laser delivers 6.8 W with 45% optical-to-optical efficiency, in a beam with M² factor of 1.15; the slope efficiency was 57%. The multi-pass green power and conversion efficiency were 1.38 W and 19.6%, respectively. To the authors best knowledge this is the highest power ever reported by quasi-phase matching at room temperature. The present result supports the prospect of obtaining compact and high power visible source based on bulk periodically poled MgO:LiNbO₃.

In conclusion, CW power of 1.18 W at 531 nm with 16.8% power conversion efficiency was obtained from a 25-mm-long uncoated bulk PPMgLN in a single-pass frequency doubling scheme using a Nd:GdVO₄ laser as pumping source; the PPMgLN internal power of and conversion efficiency were 1.38 W and 19.6%, respectively. To the authors best knowledge this is the highest power ever reported by quasi-phase matching at room temperature. The present result supports the prospect of obtaining compact and high power visible source based on bulk periodically poled MgO:LiNbO₃.

References
**Figure 1.** The experimental set-up used for SHG generation. L: focusing lens, TEC: thermoelectric cooler, M1, M2, M3, M: mirrors.

**Figure 2.** Internal cw 531-nm output power and internal conversion efficiency versus the 1063-nm incident power for a) 10-mm and b) 25-mm long PPMgLN. Continuous lines shows the modeling with a quadratic dependence.