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光学制冷-固体激光器 冷却的科学与应用

Optical Refrigeration_ Science and Applications of Laser Cooling of Solids



Optical Refrigeration

Edited by
Richard Epstein and
Mansoor Sheik-Bahae

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Contents

Preface IX

1	Optical Refrigeration in Solids: Fundamentals and Overview	1
	<i>Richard I. Epstein and Mansoor Sheik-Bahae</i>	
1.1	Basic Concepts	1
1.2	The Four-Level Model for Optical Refrigeration	4
1.3	Cooling Rare-Earth-Doped Solids	7
1.4	Prospects for Laser Cooling in Semiconductors	12
1.5	Experimental Work on Optical Refrigeration in Semiconductors	21
1.6	Future Outlook	26
	References	28
2	Design and Fabrication of Rare-Earth-Doped Laser Cooling Materials	33
	<i>Markus P. Hehlen</i>	
2.1	History of Laser Cooling Materials	33
2.2	Material Design Considerations	36
2.2.1	Active Ions	37
2.2.1.1	Rare-Earth Ions for Laser Cooling	37
2.2.1.2	Active Ion Concentration	39
2.2.2	Host Materials	40
2.2.2.1	Multiphonon Relaxation	40
2.2.2.2	Chemical Durability	42
2.2.2.3	Thermal and Thermomechanical Properties	42
2.2.2.4	Refractive Index	43
2.2.3	Material Purity	45
2.2.3.1	Vibrational Impurities	45
2.2.3.2	Metal-Ion Impurities	46
2.3	Preparation of High-Purity Precursors	48
2.3.1	Strategies for Preparing High-Purity Precursors	48
2.3.2	Process Conditions	50
2.3.2.1	Purity of Commercial Precursors	50

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《基座光学专业文集--激光篇》

2.3.2.2	Process Equipment	50
2.3.2.3	Clean Environment	51
2.3.3	Material Purification	51
2.3.3.1	Filtration and Recrystallization	51
2.3.3.2	Solvent Extraction Using Chelating Agents	52
2.3.3.3	Fluorination and Drying in Hydrogen Fluoride Gas	54
2.3.3.4	Sublimation and Distillation	55
2.3.3.5	Electrochemical Purification	57
2.3.4	Determination of Trace Impurity Levels	57
2.4	Glass Fabrication	59
2.4.1	Glass Formation in ZrF_4 Systems	59
2.4.2	ZBLAN Glass Fabrication	62
2.4.2.1	Melting of the Starting Materials	62
2.4.2.2	Evaporative Losses	63
2.4.2.3	Dissolution and Homogenization	63
2.4.2.4	Optimum Rate of Cooling	63
2.4.2.5	Viscosity for Casting	64
2.4.2.6	Typical Glass Fabrication Parameters	64
2.4.3	Fluoride, Chloride, and Sulfide Glass Fabrication	65
2.5	Halide Crystal Growth	65
2.6	Promising Future Materials	66
2.6.1	Simplified Fluoride Glasses	67
2.6.2	Fluoride Crystals	67
2.6.3	Chloride and Bromide Crystals	68
	References	68
3	Laser Cooling in Fluoride Single Crystals	75
	<i>Stefano Bigotta and Mauro Tonelli</i>	
3.1	Introduction	75
3.2	Physical Properties	77
3.3	Experimental	78
3.3.1	Growth Apparatus	78
3.3.2	Spectroscopic Setup	80
3.3.3	Cooling Setup	81
3.4	Spectroscopic Analysis	83
3.5	Cooling Results	87
3.5.1	Cooling Potential	87
3.5.2	Bulk Cooling	89
3.6	Conclusion	93
	References	94
4	Er^{3+}-Doped Materials for Solid-State Cooling	97
	<i>Joaquin Fernandez, Angel Garcia-Adeva and Rolindes Balda</i>	
4.1	Low Phonon Energy Materials	97
4.1.1	KPb_2Cl_5 Crystal	98
4.1.2	Fluorochloride Glasses	101

4.2	Internal Cooling Measurements	101
4.3	Bulk Cooling Measurements	105
4.4	Influence of Upconversion Processes on the Cooling Efficiency of Er^{3+}	108
4.4.1	Spectroscopic Grounds: Upconversion Properties of Er^{3+} Under Pumping in the $^4\text{I}_{9/2}$ Manifold	108
4.4.2	A Phenomenological Cooling Model Including Upconversion	111
	References	114
5	Laser Refrigerator Design and Applications	117
	<i>Gary Mills and Mel Buchwald</i>	
5.1	Introduction	117
5.2	Modeling	119
5.3	Modeling Results	121
5.4	Design Issues	124
5.5	Mirror Heating	129
5.6	Applications	133
5.6.1	Comparison to Other Refrigeration Technologies	133
5.6.2	Vibration	133
5.6.3	Electromagnetic and Magnetic Noise	134
5.6.4	Reliability and Lifetime	134
5.6.5	Ruggedness	134
5.6.6	Cryocooler Mass and Volume	134
5.6.7	Efficiency and System Mass	134
5.6.8	Cost	136
5.7	Microcooling Applications	136
	References	138
6	Microscopic Theory of Luminescence and its Application to the Optical Refrigeration of Semiconductors	139
	<i>Greg Rupper, Nai H. Kwong and Rolf Binder</i>	
6.1	Introduction	139
6.2	Microscopic Theory of Absorption and Luminescence	141
6.3	Cooling Theory	151
6.4	Cooling of Bulk GaAs	153
6.5	Cooling of GaAs Quantum Wells	159
6.6	Cooling of Doped Bulk Semiconductors	162
6.7	Conclusion	164
	References	165
7	Improving the Efficiency of Laser Cooling of Semiconductors by Means of Bandgap Engineering in Electronic and Photonic Domains	169
	<i>Jacob B. Khurgin</i>	
7.1	Introduction	169

7.2	Engineering the Density of States Using Donor–Acceptor Transitions	171
7.3	Refrigeration Using Phonon-Assisted Transitions	174
7.4	Laser Cooling Using Type II Quantum Wells	180
7.5	Photonic Bandgap for Laser Cooling	186
7.6	Novel Means of Laser Cooling Using Surface Plasmon Polaritons	189
7.7	Conclusions	193
	References	194
8	Thermodynamics of Optical Cooling of Bulk Matter <i>Carl E. Mungan</i>	197
8.1	Introduction	197
8.2	Historical Review of Optical Cooling Thermodynamics	198
8.3	Quantitative Radiation Thermodynamics	204
8.4	Ideal and Actual Performance of Optical Refrigerators	214
8.5	Closing Remarks	225
	References	230
	Index	233

Preface

Laser cooling of solids or “optical refrigeration” is a research area that encompasses basic scientific questions regarding the interaction of light with condensed matter systems and the practical issue of the design and construction of practical laser-powered cryocoolers. This volume brings together leading researchers to describe the critical issues being investigated and the approaches they are pursuing. There are two general thrusts to the current research programs: laser cooling of solids containing rare-earth (RE) ions, and the cooling of direct bandgap semiconductors. The advantages of using rare-earth-doped solids for laser cooling had been known for decades. The key optical transitions in RE-doped ions involve 4f electrons that are shielded by the filled 5s and 6s outer shells, which thus limit interactions with the surrounding lattice. Nonradiative decays due to multiphonon emission are thus suppressed.

Laser cooling of a solid was first experimentally demonstrated in 1995 with ytterbium-doped fluoride glass. Since then, researchers have demonstrated laser-induced cooling in a broad range of glasses and crystals doped with ytterbium. Later, laser cooling was achieved in thulium-doped fluoride glass. More recently, erbium-doped glasses and crystals have been laser cooled. Laser cooling of semiconductors has been more problematic. Direct bandgap semiconductors have several potential advantages over rare-earth-based cooling materials. These materials interact with light more strongly and have the potential to cool at much lower temperatures with higher cooling power densities. Additionally, they can be directly integrated into electronic and photonic devices. However, these materials have their own challenges. Semiconductors typically have high refractive indices that enhance total internal reflection and lead to luminescence trapping. Because of modest quantum efficiencies and heating from reabsorbed luminescence, net cooling is yet to be observed in semiconductors.

Chapter 1 provides an overview of research issues in optical refrigeration. It summarizes the physics of laser cooling in rare-earth-doped solids and in semiconductors and examines current research challenges. The factors that limit cooling performance in rare-earth-based coolers are parasitic heating from impurities and from components of the coolers such as the mirrors that form the cavity used to trap the pump radiation. The authors describe ongoing efforts to mitigate these problems. This chapter examines approaches to laser cooling in semiconductors

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that attempt to overcome nonradiative recombination electron–hole excitations and luminescence trapping. In particular, it addresses the interplay of properties such as quantum efficiency, excitation density and extraction efficiency, which must be adjusted to achieve effective cooling.

In Chapter 2, Markus Hehlen describes the program at Los Alamos National Laboratory to develop ultrapure rare-earth-doped glasses that will be more efficient in laser cooling. He first summarizes the current status of the laser cooling of rare-earth-based laser cooling materials and then explains the advantages and constraints that must be considered when selecting rare-earth dopants and host materials. Dr. Hehlen discusses the harmful effects of impurities, such as OH ions and transition metals. He then describes the program in his laboratory to produce chemicals that have extremely low levels of impurities and to produce nearly defect-free glass samples for laser cooling. He ends with a discussion of halide crystal growth and some promising materials for laser cooling that may be developed in the future.

In Chapter 3, Bigotta and Tonelli discuss laser cooling in fluoride single crystals. They detail the growth of high-purity rare-earth-doped BaY_2F_8 (BYF) and LiYF_4 (YLF), and show experimental results from optical refrigeration in such crystals doped with Yb. Chapter 4 deals with optical refrigeration in erbium-doped materials. The authors Fernandez, Garcia-Adeva and Balda provide a detailed description of the synthesis of chloride crystal KPb_2Cl_5 and fluorochloride glass CNBZn doped with erbium. These hosts have very low maximum phonon energies, and thus have the potential to exhibit very high quantum efficiencies. This chapter also presents experimental data on the laser cooling of these Er-doped materials at $\lambda \approx 850 \text{ nm}$. This is quite interesting, as it corresponds to a transition involving the ground state and the $^4I_{9/2}$ manifold, which is the second excited state. The authors also discuss the role of excited state absorption and upconversion in the laser cooling process of Er-doped systems.

Mills and Buchwald (Chapter 5) present a thorough analysis of the numerous practical issues involved in realizing an optical refrigerator based on rare-earth-doped materials. In particular, they consider a cooler based on Yb:ZBLAN and provide modeling results that include pump saturation, pump circulation in a nonresonant cavity, fluorescence shielding, and thermal link considerations.

Chapters 6 and 7 focus on laser cooling in semiconductors. Chapter 1 gave an overview of the macroscopic analysis and experimental issues in this field. Chapters 6 and 7 present rigorous theoretical calculations that illustrate the interplay of the physical processes involved in the laser cooling of semiconductors and to explore how the materials can be adjusted to optimize efficiency and operating temperatures. In Chapter 6, Rupper, Kwong and Binder present a comprehensive microscopic theory for absorption and luminescence in a direct-gap semiconductor under the pertinent condition of a partially ionized exciton gas. The authors also extend their analysis to 2D (quantum wells) as well as to doped bulk semiconductors. In Chapter 7, Khurgin addresses a number of important issues pertaining to laser cooling in semiconductors. In particular, he considers how to engineer the density of states, phonon-assisted absorption in the band-tail, cooling in type II quantum

wells, photonic bandgap structures, and the escape of luminescence by means of surface plasmon coupling.

In Chapter 8, Mungan reviews the concepts and history of the thermodynamics of fluorescent cooling. He discusses how the entropy and energy of beams of radiation are related. Mungan uses these results to calculate the ideal coefficient of performance for laser cooling and discusses how real-world effects reduce the efficiency. He then examines important practical topics such as radiation-balanced lasing, in which the heat generated by lasing is compensated for by fluorescent cooling, and the recycling of output optical energy into the input in order to increase the cooling efficiency.

In short, we hope that this book will serve its purpose as a major collection of the most significant findings to date in this relatively young yet thriving area of research. While the authors in this volume have attempted to provide forward-looking accounts of their areas of research, we have no doubt that the rapid and continuous progress in optical refrigeration will soon necessitate a new compendium of progress in the laser cooling of various solids and the development of optical refrigeration devices.

Albuquerque, NM
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Mansoor Sheik Bahae
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