

Spectroscopy and efficient laser operation  
around 2.8  $\mu\text{m}$  of Er:(Lu,Sc) $2\text{O}_3$  sesquioxide  
cera

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**Abstract:** A transparent “mixed” 7 at.% Er:(Lu,Sc)<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> sesquioxide ceramic was fabricated by hot isostatic pressing of commercial sesquioxide powders at 1750°C/200 MPa in argon atmosphere. It exhibited a cubic bixbyite-type structure ( $a = 10.198 \text{ \AA}$ ), a mean grain size of 5.7  $\mu\text{m}$  and high low-signal transmission of 79.1% in the near-IR. The spectroscopic properties of Er<sup>3+</sup> ions were studied. For the  $^4I_{11/2} \rightarrow ^4I_{13/2}$  transition, the stimulated-emission cross-section  $\sigma_{SE}$  is  $1.30 \times 10^{-20} \text{ cm}^2$  at 2719 nm, the corresponding luminescence branching ratio B(JJ') is 19.9% and the radiative lifetime of the  $^4I_{11/2}$  state is 4.80 ms, as determined using a Judd-Ofelt theory accounting for intermediate configuration interaction. The crystal-field splitting of Er<sup>3+</sup> multiplets was studied at 12K. The ceramic exhibits a significant inhomogeneous broadening of spectral bands. An Er:(Lu,Sc)<sub>2</sub>O<sub>3</sub> ceramic laser generated 342 mW at 2.71 and 2.85  $\mu\text{m}$  with a high slope efficiency of 41.7% (exceeding the Stokes limit) and a laser threshold of 125 mW.

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