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14. ABSTRACT

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Major Goals: The overarching goal of this research plan is to elucidate fundamental physical mechanisms that hinder development of optical micro-combs, and demonstrate that novel materials and optical engineering can be successfully applied to fabrication of on-chip optical frequency combs at visible wavelengths using III-nitride photonics integrated circuit (PIC). Three specific objectives are planned to explore the theoretical and experimental aspects of this innovative photonics platform:

1. Investigate hitherto unexplored fundamental optical processes in III-nitride photonics including photonic crystals (PhCs) structures, four-wave mixing (FWM) processes, and group velocity dispersion (GVD) properties.
2. Tackle engineering obstacles presented by MOCVD growth and nanofabrication to achieve a III-nitride PIC, consisting of (i) an InGaN-based continuous wave (CW) green LD; (ii) a AlN-based PhC resonator operating at visible wavelengths, which is the first of its kind; and (iii) AlN waveguides.
3. Demonstrate the world's first on-chip visible micro-comb using III-nitride PIC, thus marking an important advancement towards realizing on-chip visible and UV optical combs, which can significantly enhance the state of the art in optical computing and bio-chemical sensing applications.

Proposed here is a pathway towards on-chip optical frequency comb generation that uses an innovative photonic platform (III-nitride PIC), with the potential to transform the foundations of existing frequency comb technology. For example, the proposed III-nitride PIC will enable the development of hitherto unachievable visible and UV micro-combs for on-chip optical computing and for bio-chemical sensing applications, which are critical to the DoD mission. Long-term, the study is expected to advance basic knowledge in III-nitride photonics including PhC, laser physics, and nonlinear optics, all of which are essential to the design and fabrication of other III-nitride PIC components, such as photodetectors, optical modulators, and optical logic gates, all of which again are attractive for a range of mission-critical DoD defense applications.

Accomplishments: 1. Visible spectrum frequency comb via supercontinuum generation.

To achieve frequency comb generation that covers visible spectrum, one promising approach is to exploit near-visible (800 nm) pumping and perturb the soliton by third order dispersion. The near-visible spectrum pumping allows nonlinear optical energy transfer from infrared (IR) to visible spectrum at high energy efficiency. Solitons perturbed by third order dispersion provides directional energy transfer through non-solitonic radiation. As a result, the broadband frequency comb can be obtained. To achieve this target, we fabricated high performance AlN waveguides, and successfully excited a high order mode (TE₁₀) within a micro photonic waveguide, which provides

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anomalous dispersion in the pumping wavelength region. The narrow spectra frequency comb pumping source was obtained from a mode locked Ti:Sapphire laser (Spectra-physics, Tsunami), and the output spectrum was collected by an optical spectrum analyzer (Yokogawa, AQ6373B). Additionally, numerical solvers were also built for the modeling of frequency combs. The spectral evolution of short pulse was modeled by the in-house made nonlinear Schrodinger's equation (NSE) solvers, and the waveguide propagation loss was estimated by in-house made dyadic Green's functions (DGF).

By carefully adjusting the dispersion parameters, anomalous dispersion was obtained with a zero-dispersion wavelength near 750 nm. By pumping the device at the wavelength at 810 nm, a broadband frequency comb was obtained with a main spectrum covering from 490 nm to 1100 nm. Since the AIN possesses non-zero second order susceptibility, a secondary spectrum from 405 nm to 425 nm was also observed from the second harmonic generation. Due to the near-zero-dispersion wavelength pumping, only ~0.36 nJ pulse energy within TE₁₀ mode was required. To the best of our knowledge, this is the first on-chip demonstration that covers the most portion of visible spectrum wavelengths. Numerical simulation was also performed to investigate the broadening mechanism, and the outcome of pulse spectral evolution agrees well with our hypothesis that the spectrum was broadened by soliton fission through third order dispersion within TE₁₀ mode. Additionally, to confirm the coherence the broadband outcome spectrum, shot noise was added onto the numerical simulation, good coherence was maintained, indicating that the broadening process preserves the phase coherence. The recorded spectrum and numerical simulation are provided the Figs. 1 to 3. These results were published in two journal papers in ACS Photonics and Nanophotonics, and were presented in international conferences such as CLEO and ICNS.

2. UV spectrum using QPM method

To further expand the spectrum obtained from previous results into ultraviolet (UV) region, we explore the quasi-phase matching (QPM) method, which is achieved by periodically modifying the waveguide width. When QPM is used in the second harmonic generation (SHG). The second order susceptibility will periodically change its sign, which allows for continuous growth of harmonically generated optical power. When QPM is used in the soliton fission, it will periodically modify the group velocity dispersion (GVD) and the high orders of dispersion terms. Our results show that the phase matched points will extend further into the UV region of the spectrum, which is beneficial for supercontinuum generation to cover the full UV-visible spectrum.

To investigate the QPM techniques, we simulated various periodically modified waveguide structures and the results are shown in Figs. 4 and 5. When waveguide geometry was modulated, the dispersion of the soliton split into different orders, which led to the phase matching at different orders. When no loss was applied, a 30 nm of broadening can be observed from 480 nm to 450 nm. When loss was applied, QPM generated frequency component was still observable. These results were published in two journal papers in ACS Photonics and Nanophotonics, and were presented in international conferences such as CLEO and ICNS.

3. Coherence estimation of supercontinuum spectrum

We used a first-order coherent function to numerically estimate the coherence of supercontinuum spectrum on our AIN devices. The simulation takes 100 supercontinuum pulses with a standard shot noise at the input spectra, and the noise spectrum is constituted by one photon per spectral bin. Using our home-built first-order coherent function simulation tool, we also calculated the coherence of supercontinuum spectrum under different relative intensity noise (RIN), and the results are shown in Fig. 6. When no RIN was applied, the coherence function was close to unity. When RIN was within MHz frequency range or THz frequency range, the RIN originated from fluctuations between or within the pulses, both of which affected the coherence function of the devices. The simulation suggests that the internal power fluctuation of every single pulse is of crucial importance in achieving coherent supercontinuum generations. These results were published in two journal papers in ACS Photonics and Nanophotonics, and were presented in international conferences such as CLEO and ICNS.

4. Fabrication of AIN low loss waveguide

To analysis the loss mechanisms, we developed a numerical model to evaluate the defect scattering from III-nitride waveguides. Since III-nitride thin films grown on sapphire substrates are accompanied with high density of threading dislocations, the outcome of this research highlights the importance of MOCVD growth and suggests that threading dislocation (TD) density over 10^{10} (cm⁻²) would induce significant scattering loss. Fig. 7 shows the simulation results. During the study, we also found out that because our current AIN devices are fabricated on sapphire substrates, the SiO₂ coating layers that we used will result in asymmetric refractive index profiles in the devices, which is detrimental for photonic crystal structures. To solve this issue, we optimized the fabrication processes by introducing a new coating layers of ALD deposited Al₂O₃ thin films, and replacing the original SiO₂ coating with the SiO_xN_y coating. After the ICP etching of AIN, an Al₂O₃ thin layer was deposited using ALD.

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Thanks to the excellent uniformity of ALD, this thin layer provided full coverage on the etched sidewall, which passivated the dangling bonds and reduced the trap states at the surface. Then, the cladding layer of SiOxNy was deposited. We properly modified the PECVD recipe so that the index of SiOxNy matched with the index of sapphire substrate. These results were published in one journal paper in Optics Express, and were presented in international conferences such as CLEO and ICNS.

5. Low Loss Ga₂O₃ waveguide

Recently a new class of wide band gap semiconductor beta-phase gallium oxide (β -Ga₂O₃) has emerged with many promising properties. β -Ga₂O₃ possesses a bandgap energy of 4.8 eV and exhibits large laser induced damage threshold, which is promising for high power integrated photonic devices from UV to infrared (IR). The low refractive index contrast between the core and the cladding layers will also minimize the scattering loss in the devices. β -Ga₂O₃ also has a small lattice mismatch with the InAlGa_N material system, which leads to the possible active integration of Ga₂O₃ photonic devices with InAlGa_N lasers and detectors. Despite these attractive properties, there is no research efforts on β -Ga₂O₃ photonic devices, and their optical performance is largely unknown. In this period, we fabricated β -Ga₂O₃ waveguide devices and characterized their optical loss performance. We developed a chlorine based inductively coupled plasma etching method, which led to the smooth waveguide sidewall and reduced the loss in β -Ga₂O₃ devices. Four different laser wavelengths were used to measure the propagation loss from 810 nm to 400 nm. When the guide mode was propagat

Training Opportunities: One student Hong Chen finished his Ph.D. Thesis under the grant. The details are as follows.

Hong Chen, "Nonlinear integrated photonics in the visible spectrum based on III-N material platform", Arizona State University, Ph.D. Thesis, May 2020.

*This thesis received Palais Outstanding Doctoral Student Award, which is the highest honor for ASU ECEE Ph.D. thesis with 1 awardee annually.

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Results Dissemination: 1. Journal Publications.

- 1). H. Chen, J. Zhou, D. Li, D. Chen, A. K. Vinod, H. Fu, X. Huang, T. H. Yang, J. Montes, K. Fu, C. Yang, C. Z. Ning, C. W. Wong, A. M. Armani, and Y. Zhao, "Supercontinuum generation in high order waveguide mode with near visible pumping using AlN waveguides", ACS Photonics 8, 1344 (2021).
- 2). J. He, H. Chen, J. Hu, J. Zhou, Y. Zhang, A. Kovach, C. Sideris, M. C. Harrison, Y. Zhao, and A. M. Armani, "Nonlinear Nanophotonics devices in the ultraviolet to visible wavelength range", Nanophotonics 8, 1344 (2020).
- 3). J. Zhou, H. Chen, H. Fu, K. Fu, X. Deng, X. Huang, T. H. Yang, J. A. Montes, C. Yang, X. Qi, B. Zhang, X. Zhang, and Y. Zhao, "Demonstration of low loss α -Ga₂O₃ optical waveguides in the UV–NIR spectra", Applied Physics Letters 115, 251108 (2019).
- 4). H. Chen, H. Fu, J. Zhou, X. Huang, T. H. Yang, K. Fu, C. Yang, J. A. Montes, and Y. Zhao, "Study of crystalline defect induced optical scattering loss inside photonic waveguides in UV–visible spectral wavelengths using volume current method", Optics Express 27, 17262 (2019).

2. Conference Presentations.

- 1). J. Zhou, H. Chen, H. Fu, K. Fu, X. Deng, X. Huang, T. H. Yang, J. A. Montes, C. Yang, X. Qi, B. Zhang, X. Zhang, and Y. Zhao, "Demonstration of low loss α -Ga₂O₃ optical waveguides in the UV–NIR spectra", 2020 CLEO, May 2020, San Jose, CA, Poster Presentation.
- 2). J. Zhou, H. Chen, H. Fu, K. Fu, X. Deng, X. Huang, T. H. Yang, J. A. Montes, C. Yang, X. Qi, B. Zhang, X. Zhang, and Y. Zhao, "Demonstration of low loss α -Ga₂O₃ optical waveguides in the UV–visible spectra", 2020 MRS Spring Meeting, Apr 2020, Phoenix, AZ, Oral Presentation.
- 3). H. Chen, H. Fu, X. Huang, J. Zhou, T. H. Yang, K. Fu, J. Montes, C. Yang, and Y. Zhao, "Supercontinuum generation from dispersion engineered AlN waveguide arrays", The 13th International Conference on Nitride Semiconductors 2019 (ICNS-13), Jul 2019, Bellevue, WA, Oral Presentation.
- 4). H. Chen, J. Zhou, T. H. Yang, H. Fu, J. Montes, X. Huang, K. Fu, J. Montes, C. Yang, and Y. Zhao, "Study of optical scattering loss induced by crystalline defects inside AlN waveguides using volume current method", The 13th International Conference on Nitride Semiconductors 2019 (ICNS-13), Jul 2019, Bellevue, WA, Oral Presentation.
- 5). H. Chen, J. Zhou, H. Fu, X. Huang, T. H. Yang, K. Fu, J. Montes, C. Yang, and Y. Zhao, "Supercontinuum generation from dispersion engineered AlN nanophotonic waveguide arrays," CLEO 2019, May 2020, San Jose, CA, Oral Presentation.
- 6). H. Chen, J. Zhou, H. Fu, X. Huang, and Y. Zhao, "Study of crystalline defect induced optical scattering loss inside AlN waveguides in UV-visible spectral wavelengths", CLEO 2019, May 2020, San Jose, CA, Oral Presentation.

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PARTICIPANTS:

Participant Type: PD/PI

Participant: Yuji Zhao

Person Months Worked: 2.00

Project Contribution:

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Participant Type: Graduate Student (research assistant)

Participant: Jingan Zhou

Person Months Worked: 12.00

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Article Title: Study of crystalline defect induced optical scattering loss inside photonic waveguides in UV–visible spectral wavelengths using volume current method

Authors: Hong Chen, Houqiang Fu, Jingan Zhou, Xuanqi Huang, Tsung-Han Yang, Kai Fu, Chen Yang, Jossue A

Keywords: Finite element method, Quantum optics, Ring resonators, Spatial frequency, Wave propagation, X ray diffraction

Abstract: In this work, we study the crystalline defect induced optical scattering loss inside photonic waveguide. Volume current method is implemented with a close form of dyadic Green's function derived. More specifically, threading dislocation induced scattering loss inside AlN waveguides in UV–visible spectrum wavelengths are studied since this material is intrinsically accompanied with high densities of dislocations. The results from this study reveal that threading dislocations contribute significant amount of scattering loss when material is not MOCVD grown. Additionally, the scattering loss is strongly dependent on polarization and waveguide geometries: TM modes exhibit higher scattering loss compared with TE modes, and the multimode large core waveguides are more susceptible to threading dislocations compared with single mode waveguides and high- aspect-ratio waveguides. Conclusions from this work can be supported by several recently published inves

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I certify that the information in the report is complete and accurate:

Signature: Yuji Zhao

Signature Date: 2/14/22 2:35PM

Final Technical Report

On-Chip Frequency Comb Generation at Visible Wavelengths Using III-Nitride Photonic Integrated Circuits

Army Research Office (ARO) PECASE Grant No. W911NF-19-1-0089

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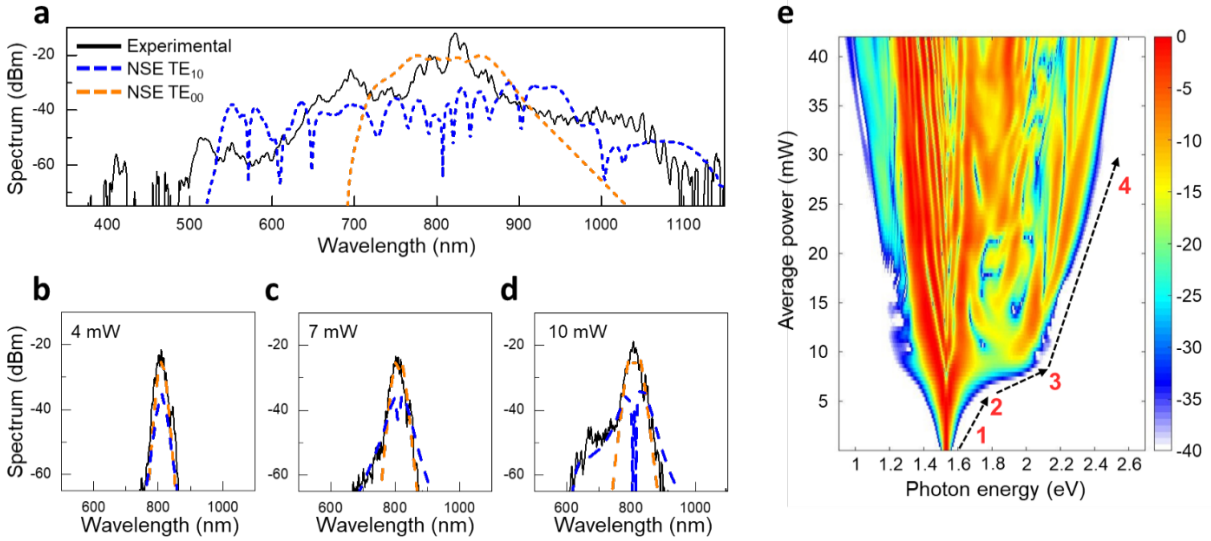


Fig. 1. (a) Experimental results of the obtained spectrum (black curve) at average pumping power of 30 mW (0.36 nJ pulse energy). Orange dash curve indicates the NSE solution of supercontinuum generation from TE₀₀ mode. Blue dash curve indicates the NSE solution for TE₁₀ mode. The experimentally recorded spectrum is composed by TE₀₀ and TE₁₀ spectrum. (b-d) Spectral evolution at different pumping power. (b) Under the average power of 4 mW, the broadening is mainly caused by self-phase modulation. (c) Above the average power of 7 mW, asymmetric broadening start to initiate due to the soliton fission through 3rd order dispersion. (d) Strong asymmetric broadening at average power of 10 mW. (e) Simulated spectrum evolution of TE₁₀ mode. From point 1 to point 4, the recorded spectrum is corresponding to (b), (c), (d), and (a), respectively.

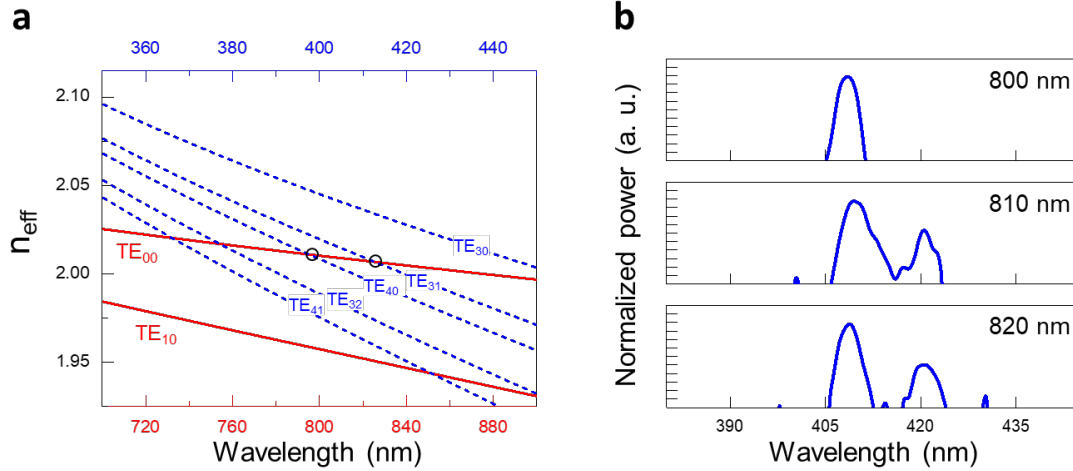


Fig. 2. (a) Calculated modal dispersion curves for TE_{00} and TE_{10} mode near fundamental wavelengths (800 nm), and the dispersion curves for high order modes near second harmonic generated wavelengths (400 nm). The two phase-matched points can be identified to be near 398 nm and 411 nm, marked out by black solid circles. (b) Experimentally recorded second harmonic spectrum at different pumping wavelengths. Two peaks can be identified at 408 nm and 421 nm, which agrees well with simulations. The small discrepancy can be attributed to varied waveguide geometry during fabrication processes. The locations of two peaks are independent of pumping wavelengths, which also suggests that the secondary spectrum is obtained by phase-matched process.

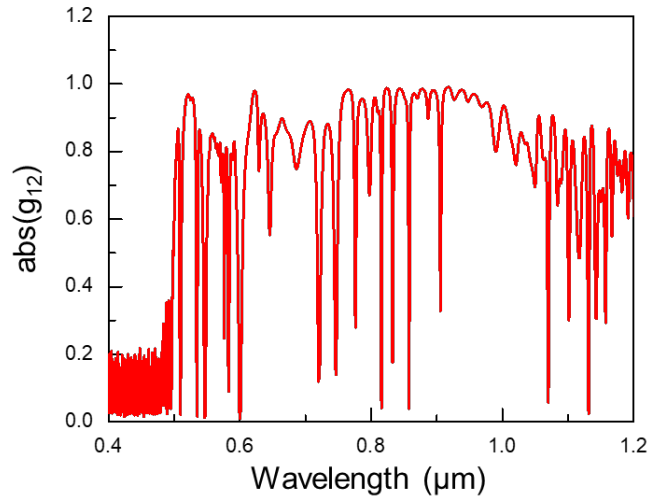


Fig. 3. The simulated coherence function (g_{12}). 100 pulses are recorded independently with standard short noise involved. The coherence function can be obtained by calculating the ensemble average of electric field. The coherence function is above 0.8 across a broadband spectrum, which suggests that the phase coherence can be well preserved during the broadening process.

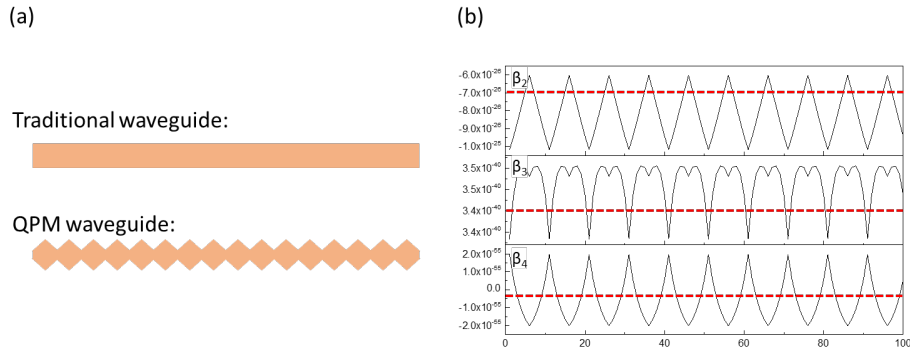


Fig. 4. The concept of QPM techniques. (a) Waveguide geometries for traditional waveguide and QPM waveguide. (b) The modulated second order, third order, and fourth order dispersions versus propagation distance.

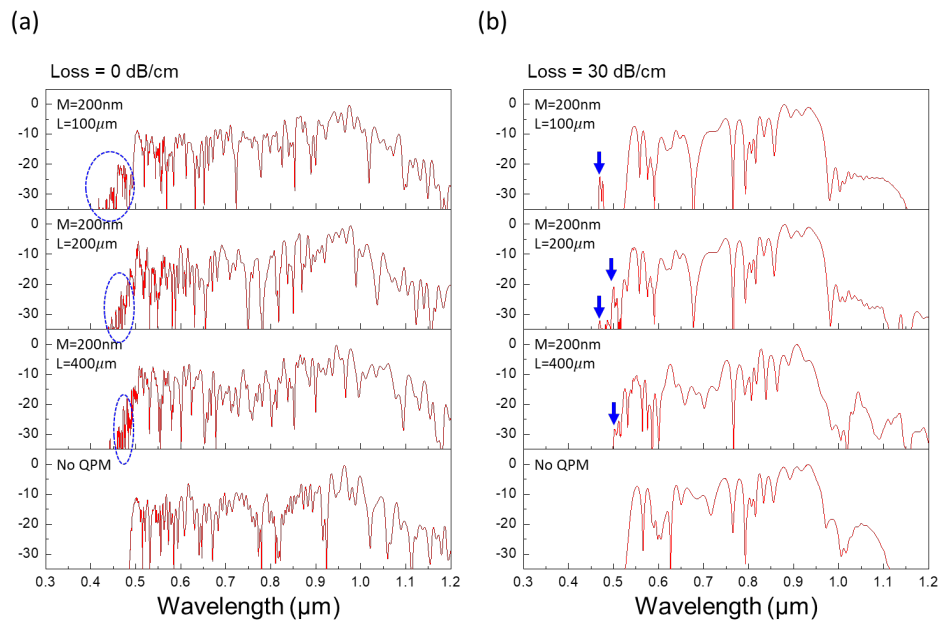


Fig. 5. The NSE simulated spectrum at different period and modulation depth. (a) The obtained spectrum when loss is not applied. The QPM generated wavelengths are marked by blue dash circles. (b) 30 dB/cm of loss was applied, the QPM signal can still be identified as marked by blue arrows.

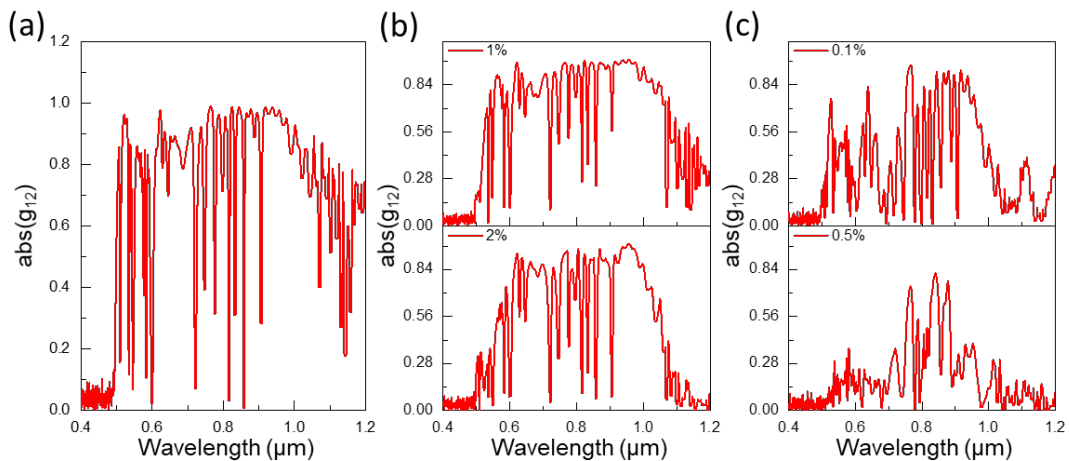


Fig. 6. The simulated first-order coherence function vs. wavelengths for AlN waveguide with a width of 1.2 μm at different noise conditions. (a) quantum limited shot noise involved. (b) shot noise plus 1% (top) and 2% (bottom) intra-pulse RIN (MHz level). (c) shot noise plus 0.1% (top) and 0.5% (bottom) inter-pulse power fluctuation.

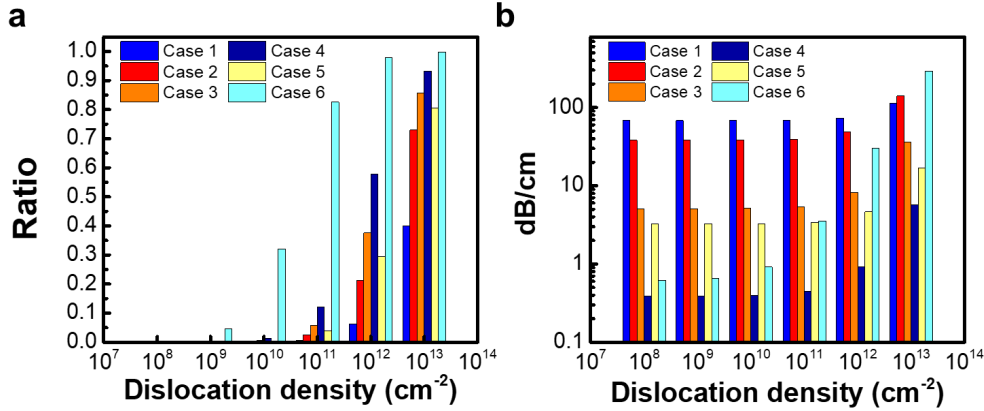


Fig. 7. (a) Calculated ratio between defect scattering loss and total loss versus dislocation density. (b) Total loss in dB/cm at different dislocation densities. For MOCVD grown thin films, the dislocation density is below 10^{10} , which indicates that the defect scattering does not contribute significant loss in MOCVD grown samples. The sputtered AlN thin films typically exhibit dislocation density above 10^{10} , where defect scattering becomes influential to the waveguide performance.

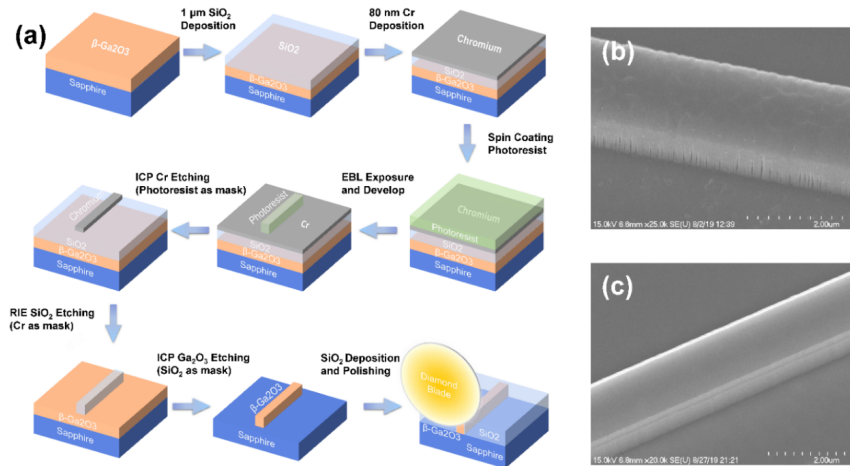


Fig. 8. (a) Schematics of the fabrication process for $\beta\text{-Ga}_2\text{O}_3$ waveguides. (b) SEM images of waveguide sidewall with unoptimized ICP recipe. (c) SEM images of waveguide sidewall with optimized ICP recipe.

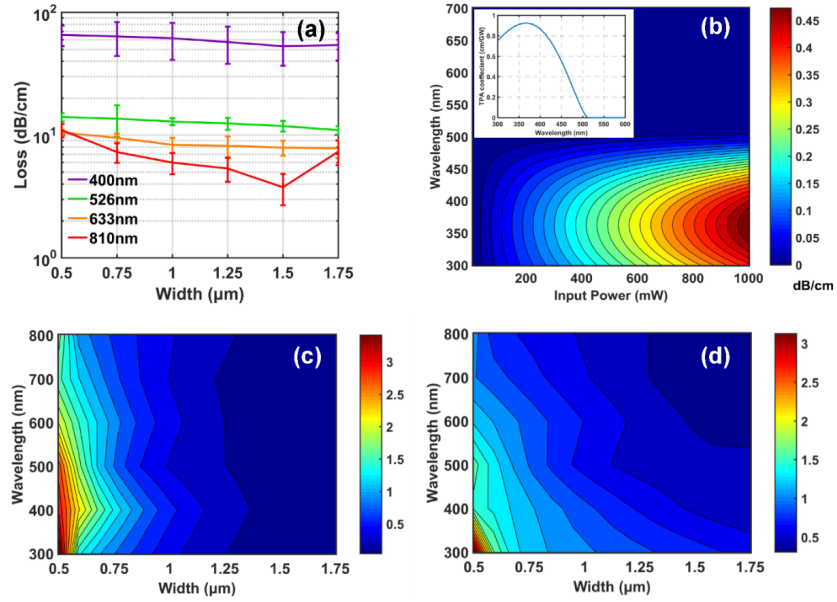


Fig. 9. (a) Measured propagation loss of β -Ga₂O₃ waveguides with different widths at different wavelengths. (b) Calculated TPA loss for β -Ga₂O₃ waveguides at different wavelengths and different input powers. (Insert: theoretical TPA coefficients) (c) Calculated sidewall scattering loss for β -Ga₂O₃ waveguides. (d) Calculated top surface scattering loss for β -Ga₂O₃ waveguides.