

Environmental Conical Nozzle Levitator Equipped with Dual Lasers

Fox Thorpe¹, Trevor Li¹, Richard Weber² and Scott McCormack^{3, S, C}

¹*University of California Davis, Davis, CA, U.S.A.*

²*Materials Development Inc., Evanston, IL, U.S.A.*

³*Materials Science and Engineering, University of California, Davis, Davis, CA, U.S.A.*
sjmccormack@ucdavis.edu

A levitation device equipped with environmental controls and oxygen mitigation has been used to analyze molten samples using laser heating. To date, the highest temperature achieved in this system is ~4000 °C; achieved using a molten HfO₂ sample. This device is equipped with two lasers to enable heating and melting of a variety of high temperature materials: a 400 W CO₂ laser (10.6 μm wavelength) and a 500 W Ytterbium Fiber laser (1.07 μm wavelength). The temperature is determined using two single-color laser pyrometers at 0.9 μm (750 – 3500 °C) and 0.65 μm (750 – 5000 °C). To avoid reaction, poisoning, and oxidation, this system uses a sealed environmental chamber that is vacuumed to <500 Pa (<5×10⁻³ atm) and filled with ultra-high pure Argon (<1000 ppb reactive gases) which is then passed through a reactive getter to <1 ppb reactive gases. Oxide samples are levitated in oxygenated streams. This system was used to determine the melting point of 3 mm diameter spherical samples of various metal (Ni, Ti, Nb, Ta), oxide (TiO₂, Nb₂O₅, Ta₂O₅, Al₂O₃, ZrO₂, HfO₂) samples with a well characterized error (±~2%). Further experiments were completed on UHTC and high temperature systems including diborides, carbides, and metal alloy systems. The melting point was determined by analyzing the cooling curve created from heating the samples above the melting point and observing the recalescence as the sample solidifies. Corrections were made for sample emissivity to ensure temperature accuracy.